

Omagh massacre

'We feel very bitter. No one can quite believe a bomb has claimed the three young lads and our friends from Spain'
Police sergeant Mick Murray

All 28 victims of the Omagh bomb named last night



'I just wish the bombers would stop'

VICTIMS' STORIES/ Relatives recall their loved ones' last moments and how they came to be in Omagh on the day of the blast



James Barker's family had moved to Northern Ireland in search of a better life

THE broken body of 12-year-old James Barker was seen by millions being stretched from the scene of the blast. Yesterday it emerged that his family had moved to Ireland in search of a better life.

Victor Barker, a solicitor, and his Irish wife Maria decided a little over a year ago to move from Surrey to the barren beauty of Co Donegal. To finance the dream, Mr Barker, aged 41, had been living a dual existence by continuing to run his legal practice in Chertsey and commuting at weekends to the new family home in the small town of Buncrana.

James, a keen sportsman who had been due to start at a Belfast prep school next month, was fatally injured in the blast and died later in hospital along with Fernando Blasco, a Spanish exchange student who had been staying at the Barkers' home along with his sister, Uki, who suffered severe head injuries. Fernando and Uki's father, Manuel Blasco, who flew to Ulster yesterday, was wounded in a 1992 Basque separatist attack in Spain.

Mrs Barker said her son had known nothing of the tribal hatreds that cost him his life. Mr Barker, who had made his regular trip from Surrey to be with his family last week-

end, said of the bombers: "I just wish they would stop. I wish they would stop."

ADRIAN Gallagher should have been working on Saturday at the car repair firm he had spent the last two years building up with his father, Michael. Instead the 21-year-old mechanic, known as Aidan by family and friends, decided to take the day off for a shopping trip to Omagh. He was killed in the blast as he shopped for a new pair of working boots and jeans in the town's high street.

"When I heard the explosion I felt there was something terribly wrong,"

his father said. Leaving his wife and daughter at home, Mr Gallagher went to the hospital to try to find his son. By 11pm, the family still had no idea whether Aidan had survived.

"The list of names in the leisure centre was getting shorter and shorter and you just started to have that inevitability that started to set in, that you didn't want to believe, that the worst was coming."

THE biggest ordeal facing Jolene Marlow's family this week should have been the publication of her A level results and the choice of her future. On Saturday, the 17-

year-old pupil at Loreto Convent grammar school was killed by the car bomb which also seriously injured her younger sister, Nicola.

Fr Terence Connolly said the tragedy had left their parents, Joseph and Bridie, "broken-hearted", while their three younger brothers, Paul, Rory and Niall, were struggling to cope with what happened.

JULIA Hughes was spending her summer holidays at home in Omagh before returning to university in Dundee when she was killed. The 21-year-old had a summer job in one of the shops which took the full force of the blast.

"She was a really, really nice girl," said her tutor Christine Heller, who led tributes from university staff. "A conscientious student, popular and friendly."

A university spokeswoman added: "We are deeply saddened by this atrocity and that one of our students has been killed in this way. The cutting short of a life is always tragic, the more so when it involves the young generation on whom our hopes for a peaceful future depend."

VOLUNTEERS at the Oxfam charity shop in Omagh paid tribute yesterday to two teen-

agers who worked there in their spare time before they were killed by Saturday's explosion.

For several months before the tragedy, Lorraine Wilson, a 15-year-old pupil at Omagh High School, had given up her Saturdays to work in the shop, along with her best friend Samantha McFarland, 17.

The shop was in the area that the police cleared after the bomb warning and was not damaged in the blast. But the teenagers had moved to the area where the explosion occurred.

Another volunteer suffered a family tragedy on Saturday. Betty White, who has worked at the shop for 10 years, lost her brother, Fred, aged 60, and nephew, Brian, 25.

TWELVE-year-old Sean McLoughlin and Oran Doherty, eight, were with their friend James Barker on a last-minute shopping trip into Omagh after a visit to the town's folk park with the visiting Spanish exchange students.

Sean was an altar boy at St Michael's Oratory church in Buncrana. "He was a lovely wee fella," said Fr Charles Keane. "The one memory I have of him is his wee smiling face."

The boys' death has left the tiny town numb with shock. Police sergeant Mick

Murray said: "We feel very bitter. No one can quite believe that a bomb has claimed the three young lads and our friends from Spain."

BRENDA Devine was born three months premature and had clung to life. Just 20 months later she was among Omagh's dead.

On Saturday, her mother Tracey, 27, had gone into town to shop for a wedding gift for her brother, taking Brenda with her. The baby died in the blast while her mother was left fighting for her life with 60 per cent burns.

GARETH Conway died as he shopped in preparation for the first proper date with his first proper girlfriend.

The 19-year-old from Carrickmore had just left Omagh Technical College and had been accepted for a place on an engineering course at the town's Magee College. His exam results are due out today.

ESTHER Gibson, aged 36, from Beragh, had recently got engaged and was planning to marry next July. She worked in a clothing factory and, as a Sunday School teacher for the Rev Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church, knew the DUP leader. "She was a very dedicated Christian and a fine chil-

dren's worker," Mr Paisley said. "She was a very fine girl with a good future. This is terrible for the children and the congregation."

GERALDINE Breslin, a 49-year-old mother of one, and her best friend Anne McCombe, 48, a mother of two adult sons, were on their break at the clothes shop when they were killed.

Mrs Breslin's husband Mark and their 14-year-old son Gareth were being comforted at their home in Omagh yesterday. Fr John Forbes, who has known the couple for two years, described Mrs Breslin as "a beautiful woman who was the salt of the earth."

The women's friendship bridged the sectarian divide. Mrs Breslin was a Catholic. Mrs McCombe a Protestant.

ALAN Radford was among the last of the victims to be identified. His family did not find out until Sunday night that he was dead.

His brother, Paul, said it was so cruel that his brother had never been involved in the politics of Northern Ireland and yet had been murdered in such a way. The 17-year-old had been awaiting the results of his GCSE exams.

Stuart Millar

We will not let evil win, says Blair New terrorist legislation ruled out

An extract from an article by the Prime Minister in today's editions of the Belfast Newsletter and the Irish News - the main Unionist and nationalist papers in Belfast.

"WHAT I saw in the Royal Victoria Hospital on Sunday night in Belfast will stay with me all my life.

"There was the couple whose daughter was just a mass of bandages, drugs, wires, only her mouth visible. Her fiancé in the burns unit, fighting for his life. There was the young man staring

ahead of him, whose three-year-old daughter had died. There was the Spanish couple whose child lay unconscious. Other victims included a 14-year-old girl blinded for life.

"I think, as any parent would, of my sons or daughter. I would go mad with grief should it happen to them. In politics, there are ups and downs. But this is different.

"There is a sense not just of anguish but of incomprehension. How can anyone deliberately do that? Do they feel at all? Are they sitting now in some place or other with any shred of remorse, doubt, or

even pity? It is a feeling of which rage is a part, but it is more than that. It is a despair deeper than normal grief.

"So I sat with them, alternating between a sense of helplessness and my innermost self-telling me what I know to be true: that even now, especially now, we cannot give up. Each of the relatives told me that. Do not give up.

"There will be anger at the politicians. How can you let it happen? We must absorb it and listen to it, but we must not lose our nerve.

"This was an attack upon the whole community - na-

tionalist, Unionist and neither. It was perpetrated by a small group of dissidents who do not represent anyone. Their very barbarity is a reflection of utter isolation.

"The purpose of these renegades is clear: to stop the Good Friday agreement. So that we all go back to the days when terrorists on both sides perpetrated outrages every day, in place of resolving differences by democracy.

"What happened on Saturday is the past. If we give up and return to it, then they win. Evil will have secured its objective."

Richard Norton-Taylor

OLD-fashioned police work, backed up by painstaking intelligence-gathering, remained the key ingredients of the fight against terrorism, security sources said yesterday, as the Government appeared to rule out new legislation in response to the Omagh outrage.

One other practical measure - the stepping up of border controls - was announced yesterday by Mr Mowlem, the Northern Ire-

land Secretary, after a meeting with the Irish Justice Minister, John O'Donoghue.

Interment without trial - no longer on the British statute book but still available in the Republic - is likely to have been discussed at a separate meeting in Belfast yesterday between Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC chief constable, and Pat Byrne, commissioner of the Irish Garda.

Though Ms Mowlem said interment was "still an option", she added that such a move had "serious difficulties" in the past and she herself was not a supporter.

What dominated the discussions, Ms Mowlem said, were ways of "making it easier to get convictions" for membership of proscribed organisations. The Prevention of Terrorism Act outlawed support for membership of the IRA and INLA and it is now expected to be extended to include the 32 County Sovereignty Committee and its paramilitary wing, the Real IRA, believed by the security services to have been responsible for the Omagh bomb.

However, evidence of membership of the IRA that can stand up in court has in the

past been extremely difficult to get. One difficulty cited by police sources yesterday was using evidence from informers, which has previously either been discredited or has not been used in order to protect these valuable assets.

The security services have also been hindered by the Interception of Communications Act, which prevents the product of telephone taps from being used in evidence in criminal trials.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act gives the police wide-ranging powers to arrest, question, stop and search.

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Omagh massacre

'I have probably had two conversations with him. . . Apart from the children no one really has much to do with them'
McKevitt neighbour

Grief, sorrow and denial in Dundalk



RUC forensic experts in Omagh yesterday to search for evidence at the scene of the bombing

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALASTAIR GRANT

'There's no real anger. We're just so sad'

MOURNERS/ Peace process still backed in village home to two victims

THE MILITANTS/ Leading dissidents try to distance themselves from Real IRA amid first signs of a backlash

John Mullan
Ireland Correspondent

WHEN British government sources, only hours after the Omagh bomb, pointed the finger of blame "across the border to Dundalk", they made no distinction between the Real IRA and the awkwardly named 32 Counties' Sovereignty Movement.

Mis and the RUC see the groups as one and the same, but in the wake of the massacre those public figures identified with the political movement were anxious to distance themselves from 100 renegades of the Real IRA. Yesterday the local policeman in the sleepy seaside village of Blackrock, three miles from Dundalk, laughed at suggestions that he might pounce on its most famous resident, a leading light in the headline 32-County Sovereignty Movement. The Garda stop him in his one-year-old black BMW now and then, just to let him know they are there. The stocky businessman, shot in both legs by the Official IRA in 1975, is unfailingly polite. Blackrock in Co Louth is a fine place to bring up a family, and Michael McKevitt, 49, and his common law wife Bernadette Sands-McKevitt, vice-chair of the organisation dedicated to Irish republicanism, have three young children. They live in a semi-detached house, its carefully tended gardens bursting with colour and littered with the debris of the youngsters, upturned bicycles and abandoned toys.

It is an everyday snapshot of contented family life. In the lounge photos of the smiling children in the uniform of the local primary school are the pride of the mantelpiece. According to neighbours, Bernadette Sands, sister of Bobby Sands, the first of 10 republican hunger-strikers to die at the Maze in 1981, moved into the three-bedroomed house first, eight years ago. Mr McKevitt, who was leaving his wife, soon joined her. The couple are unmarried. One neighbour said: "I have probably had two conversations with him in all that time. Apart from the children, no one really has much to do with them."

The couple are also partners in commerce. They run the Print Junction, a corner unit in the Long Walk shopping centre in Dundalk, home to dissident republicans. It was business as usual yesterday, as Ms Sands-McKevitt sat behind the counter. As well as offering printing and

photocopying services, she sells T-shirts. One in the shop window read: "When Irish eyes are smiling, you know they are up to something."

Ms Sands-McKevitt was refusing to comment. She pointed instead to the 32-County Sovereignty Movement's statement, issued in Dublin. To add anything more, she said, would be to try to score political points, and the people of Omagh should be allowed space to grieve.

It read: "We share the grief and sorrow of everyone of the island of Ireland and we offer our sincerest sympathy to the injured and bereaved and their family and friends at this moment in time. . . . The killing of innocent people cannot be justified in any circumstances. We are a political movement and not a military group. We reject any suggestion that our movement was responsible in any way."

Her husband is rarely at the shop. According to neighbours, he generally comes home late at night. In the mall there were the first signs of a backlash. Shopkeepers complained that business was down. They fear reprisals and violence on their doorstep. A few wanted The Print Junction out.

Brendan McGahon, one of Dundalk's TDs — members of parliament — called for selective internment of the Real IRA leadership. He said: "People like that should be locked away for a very long time. The British and Irish governments should unite in this after 30 years of dithering."

John Woods, a Dundalk solicitor who set up an anti-terrorist group after the shooting death of businessman Tom Oliver, said: "They should not have room to run around without being watched. They each should have two guards on them 24 hours a day seven days a week. They must be stamped out."

Special Branch has several leading dissident republicans under surveillance. Among them is Mr McKevitt. Along with his partner, he attended the funeral in Dublin three months ago of Ronan MacLoichain, aged 27, a father of three. He was the Real IRA's first martyr, shot dead in a failed armed robbery of a security van in Co Wicklow. Also there was Frankie Mackey, chairman of the 32-County Sovereignty Movement. He is an Omagh councillor of 15 years standing, although he was expelled from Sinn Féin four months ago over his support for the renegade organisation.



A mother and daughter grieve in Omagh. Left, from top: Michael McKevitt, Bernadette Sands-McKevitt and Frankie Mackey

Mr Mackey delivered the graveside oration for MacLoichain, whose mother, Roisin, aged 55, is still wanted in Northern Ireland over a so-called honey-trap killing of three soldiers a quarter of a century ago. He said: "As a true republican, Ronan remained loyal and true to the constitution of Oghlaigh na hEireann when others used and usurped that constitution."



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH BY DYLAN MARTINEZ

Mr Mackey's teenage son was yesterday one of five men arrested. His father, who signed a book of condolence at a special meeting of Omagh Omagh and Donaghmore. A local councillor who lost his niece in the blast, pleaded into a rank of microphones: "Will you please give us quiet country people time to grieve and not follow us at every funeral and not stick cameras in our faces."

The first funerals are expected today. Hear hear, murmur some of the crowd. Then Willie McCrea, a Democratic Unionist party assembly member, split his listeners. "The Government should bunt down and smite the terrorists," he said.

Two years ago Mr McCrea shared a platform with Billy Wright, the slain-murdered Loyalist Volunteer Force leader accused of orchestrating the murder of up to 30 Catholics in mid-Tyrone. Mumbled about pots and kettles did not reach the microphones.

Radio stations purged their playlists of anything cheerful, leaving the Titanic theme song and easy listening to fill the airways. The few drinkers inside pubs watched the TV news aghast.

A map showed them on an axis of grief running from Omagh to Buncrana, Dooenagh and Madrid. "Famous, aren't we?" said the barman.

Outside, an elderly man was giving an interview to an

There is a housing estate there called Muirheavnamore, built 20 years ago, and nicknamed Little Belfast. It was at her home there in February 1987 that Mary McGlinchey, aged 32, wife of the leading Irish National Liberation Army leader Dominic McGlinchey, was shot dead as she bathed the couple's son. She was a victim of an internal feud, as her husband was to be seven years later.

Dundalk and Newry, 10 miles away and inside Northern Ireland, have long formed an important axis in republican terrorism. The former quartermaster-general of the IRA, now leading the Real IRA, commanded the IRA brigade in the area between 1970 and 1976. He still lives near Dundalk.

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Rory Carroll

THE wave of revulsion against the Real IRA predicted by Sinn Féin has not washed over Carrickmore, a Republican village which lost two teenagers in the Omagh blast, 10 miles away.

Relatives and neighbours of Gareth Conway, aged 18, and Brenda Logue, 17, were numb with grief but refused to express anger at the bombers. They urged Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister, to resist pressure to reintroduce internment.

Tom Conway, aged 24, said he was angry only at Unionist politicians who sought to exploit his brother's murder.

"People around here don't like you scoring political points, calling for [weapons] decommissioning or whatever. We're 110 per cent behind the peace process."

A straw poll of the village produced unanimous opposition to internment as well as Mr Ahern's promise of "rootless suppression", suggesting Saturday's blast did not trigger a seismic split in the republican family.

Carrickmore was the home of the IRA's mid-Tyrone unit and hosted *Panorama's* notorious 1979 documentary footage of IRA roadblocks. Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin leader, addressed 4,000 people at a republican rally last Easter.

Shopkeepers, street sweepers, pedestrians and housewives agreed that the bomb was appalling but said it did not justify internment, which was wrong and doomed to fail. They said their anger was directed at Ian Paisley and other unionists, who were greater pariahs than the Real IRA after calling for an end to the peace process.

One retailer, who asked not to be named, said: "Look, they [the bombers] are bastards, worse than that, much worse, but they're our bastards."

Another man said he knew both the victims but could not bring himself to go along with anything Mr Paisley said. Others compared the attack to an accidental catastrophe like a plane crash. Most felt casualties were not intended.

Mr Conway said his brother's death left him saddened and incredulous. "Gareth was completely non-political. He wouldn't have known the difference between the Real IRA, Continuity or whatever. He was more interested in Manchester United and getting a new shirt."

The least academic of his six siblings, 18-night study had paid off for Gareth with his acceptance by the University of Ulster for an electronics degree. A defender with Tyrone's Gaelic Football Club, he had started a summer job.

On Saturday he had arranged a date with a new girlfriend, so cashed his first pay cheque and headed into Omagh to buy contact lenses and a pair of jeans.

Michaela, aged 22, his sister, said: "He was a very gentle person. If he walked into a room you wouldn't hear him. You should have seen how chuffed he was to have a girlfriend."

The Conways met the family of Brenda Logue at the leisure centre last Saturday while waiting for news. Brenda's brothers and sisters could not look at the mutilated body, preferring to remember her as she was.

Gareth's body was not badly damaged, and the Conways will be able to have an open coffin for the funeral, probably next Tuesday. For that they are thankful.

Michaela said: "We're not into blame or condemnation or anything like that. People are grieving on both sides. There's no political alignment in this atrocity. There's no real anger. We're just sad, so sad."

Numbly going through the motions as the shock sinks in

BLAST SCENE/Media army urged not to intrude as bombed town struggles to comprehend

Rory Carroll

IT wasn't much, but yesterday's watery sunshine, roadworks and traffic jams gifted the people of Omagh a fragment of normality. They went through the motions: dressing, eating, washing up, some even went to work. A man on the radio spoke of rebuilding the high street, the peace and broken lives. No one else talked like that. At first there is the compre-

hending, grieving and hoping. Comprehending how it could be that their town, which asleep walked through The Troubles, had mutated from a place to an event, a byword for atrocity. The president of Ireland and the British prime minister were standing outside their ruined shops, doing live TV link-ups to the rest of the world, and the people of Omagh couldn't believe it. Grieving convoys of stony-eyed families trundled along country lanes to pay their

respects to neighbours and relatives. Dozens of bouquets were laid at the white tape that cordoned off the scene. Some messages: Why Omagh? Is this peace? To Ann, a wonderful aunt and her colleagues who died. So many people who will always be in our thoughts.

And hoping, for the 100 seriously injured in hospital. Fear quickly followed, because despite the prayers, limbs, eyes and faces would not grow back.

Friends huddled in the street to swap reassurances about medical advances, the niftiness and comfort of the latest prosthetic limbs, the capacity of morphine to make a lifetime of pain bearable.

Three days ago those huddles were discussing the Tyrone senior football championship semi-final between Omagh and Donaghmore. A boy of perhaps six poked his father's sleeve and asked when it would be played. His father smiled and said nothing.

At the cordon Marie, aged 34, placed a single yellow carnation with the word "Why?" Her daughter looked at her quizzically, but Marie did not try to explain that their neighbour's son was dead because the Good Friday accord violated purist republican principles.

Beneath the numbness stirred the first signs of resentment for the media

army which marches up and down the town with notebooks, cameras and questionnaires. After touring the scene Oliver Gibson, an Ulster Unionist councillor who lost his niece in the blast, pleaded into a rank of microphones: "Will you please give us quiet country people time to grieve and not follow us at every funeral and not stick cameras in our faces."

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Outside, an elderly man was giving an interview to an

American TV crew about Saturday night. He spoke slowly, formally and ponderously. When he got to the bit about finding his friend's chin, the reporter turned white. Later she said the interview was too explicit to be broadcast. Aidan, a 16-year-old, stood trembling 60 yards from the cordon. He spent all morning steeling himself to return to the scene and allowed the memory to wash over him. A girl he bullied at school died and he couldn't bear it. He never meant anything by it, it was just for a laugh, but he knew she was tormented. For others it was the same. The shock of Saturday was sinking in. And yesterday, unbelievably, it felt worse.



Performance artist Andrey Bartenev from Russia in the foyer of the Royal Festival Hall. He will appear on September 13 in the Thames Festival

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARQUES

Dando marked out for brighter BBC news

Corporation's plans to produce more accessible TV bulletins threaten established presenters

Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

BRIGHT, blonde and crucially — viewer-friendly, Jill Dando is set to be the big winner in the BBC's review of its news output. The year-long review, conducted by the news and current affairs directorate under chief executive Tony Hall, is not expected to conclude until the middle of next month. Yesterday, however, details of Mr Hall's recommendations began to leak out.

Miss Dando, identified as a popular "face of the BBC", is tipped to win a £400,000 contract fronting a new-look Six O'Clock News. The early-evening television bulletin has long been overshadowed by the flagship Nine O'Clock News, and is due to be made

over into a US-style news programme.

Currently, the Six O'Clock News is presented by a rota of newsmen, including Anna Ford and Martyn Lewis. Mr Lewis's role on the programme that he once decried for not including enough good news is believed to be at risk under the proposals.

The news would also be bad for Ms Ford, who recently made an outspoken attack on the BBC's hierarchies. She presents the Six O'Clock News three times a week, her main BBC job since losing out on the weekday editions of Radio 4's Today programme.

Elsewhere in the corporation's television news output, Breakfast News is to be revamped. One of the plans under consideration would see anchor Justin Webb replaced by John Nichol-



Martyn Lewis has called for more good news; Jill Dando could offer brighter news



son. The lunchtime One O'Clock news is set to be made lighter to blend in better with the BBC's daytime schedule.

A spokesman said yesterday that no decisions had been taken yet. Mr Hall is expected to pronounce on the changes in mid-September, with the on-air reforms pencilled in for October.

One of the review's key objectives is to make news output more inclusive and accessible, after a survey of viewers and listeners branded its bulletins as too formal. BBC executives are understood to be wary,

however, of accusations of "dumbing down" output. Results of the survey were expected in February, then knocked back to April and further delayed to the autumn. One of the reasons is ITV's indiscretion on whether to move News at Ten.

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Net worth

Trevor McDonald
□ Anchor of TV flagship News at Ten. Country's best-paid newscaster with incentives and bonuses taking package to an estimated £500,000

Jeremy Paxman
□ Newsnight, University Challenge, Start the Week from autumn. Signed to BBC until 2001 in £1.2 million deal

Jill Dando
□ BBC's Six O'Clock News, Holiday, Crimewatch. Tipped to get Six O'Clock full time from autumn in deal rumoured to be worth £400,000

Michael Buerk
□ BBC's Nine O'Clock News, 599. Thought to earn £250,000

Kirsty Young
□ Channel 5 News, Kirsty Young meets... Rumours of departure have boosted salary to around £250,000

Peter Sissons, Martyn Lewis
□ BBC's Nine O'Clock News. Roughly £250,000

Hanratty case reviewed after Bentley decision

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

THREE weeks after the conviction of Derek Bentley was quashed at the Court of Appeal, another case involving an executed man is being considered.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission is deciding whether to refer back to the Court of Appeal the case of James Hanratty, who was hanged for murder in 1962.

The review comes during a debate as to whether the cases of people executed many years ago should be investigated by the commission, which has a backlog of cases of people in jail.

James Hanratty was convicted in February 1963 of the murder of Michael Gregan — the so-called A6 Murder — and was hanged shortly afterwards. Since then there has been a long campaign, including books and television documentaries, to clear his name.

A spokeswoman for the CCRC confirmed that the case was being discussed this week. A decision on whether



James Hanratty... hanged for A6 murder in 1962

to refer it back to the Court of Appeal will be made soon. Hanratty's brother, Michael, said: "We are optimistic. There has been a lot of work done."

Bob Wolfenden, author of Hanratty: The Final Verdict, said: "I'm delighted the case appears to have reached the final stages."

Last week it emerged that the sister of Ruth Ellis — hanged in 1955 for the murder of her lover — is hoping to have the case referred back for appeal. This has prompted a debate about whether such cases should be referred to the CCRC at the expense of those serving long sentences.

The CCRC is making a video to explain how the commission works. Research shows that half of prisoners have low literacy abilities and may not understand the written material. The CCRC is anxious to explain to prisoners that they cannot examine their cases until they have been through the appeal process, and have new evidence.

Since it was formed last year, the CCRC has received 1,895 applications, of which 1,026 are awaiting review; 20 cases have been referred back for appeal and 61 have been refused. A further 331 cases are being reviewed and 448 reviews have been completed. In their annual report last month, the CCRC appealed for more resources and personnel to deal with the growing backlog of cases.

Sadler's Wells smoking ban spares protesting artists

Nick Hopkins

SADLER'S Wells is to become the first major theatre in the country to introduce a blanket ban on audience smoking when its new £48 million building opens in October.

The decision was welcomed by anti-smoking groups as a sign of progressiveness. But the theatre, in Islington, north London, admitted it had backed away from a backstage ban, after an outcry from performers.

"Dancers are among the hardest smokers around," said a spokesman for Rambert Dance, a contemporary troupe which will be the first to perform at the venue.

A small room, which has been nicknamed the sin bin, has been set aside so they can indulge their addiction. "We had visions of our dancers crumpling outside the exits or going to the pub."

Sadler's Wells said the ban for the public would be popular, and it defended its decision to give performers fa-

voired status. Chief executive Ian Albery, who is credited with having saved the theatre from closure with his pragmatic approach to its financial problems, said there was no evidence to suggest that the theatre would suffer.

"Any losses will not amount to the costs caused by smoking," which could total £25,000 a year through extra cleaning or through damage to carpets, vinyl floors or chairs in the foyers," he said. "We do not think we will lose that much revenue from the bars."

A spokesman added: "We understand we are the first theatre in the country to introduce a smoking ban on this scale, but we have decided to give performers a

little more freedom. We have had to take into consideration the special needs of some of the dancers."

Rambert Dance said performers relied on smoking. "Dancers need to be thin, and they can put on weight if they stop smoking. They have an oral fixation. You would have thought that smoking affected their fitness, but it doesn't seem too."

The pressure group Ash, Action on Smoking and Health, said the ban showed the theatre appreciated the dangers of passive smoking. "In an ideal world, the theatre would have banned smoking backstage too. But many people in the arts do smoke, and the theatre seems to have taken a realistic approach."

The pro-smoking lobby group Forest said the ban would backfire. "Persecuting smokers will lose the theatre money. The trend towards prohibiting smoking is gradually being reversed, and Sadler's Wells will come to regret not having set aside a room for the public. They'll only end up going elsewhere."

Candidates get right to check exam marking

John Carvel
Education Editor

GCSE and A level candidates are to get the right to inspect their marked exam scripts to check if the results are fair and learn lessons from their mistakes, according to plans to be disclosed today by David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary.

As the exam boards prepare to announce a further improvement in the A level pass rate when this year's candidates get their results on Thursday, Mr Blunkett will serve notice that they can no longer keep their marking decisions secret.

From next year, students and teachers will be given automatic access to marked scripts if they think there are grounds for appealing against the grade on a particular paper. And Mr Blunkett is considering a more fundamental reform to allow all students to see their papers, with the marks and comments made by the examiners, whether or not they think an appeal is justified.

He views the initiative as a big step towards freedom of information in education and a spur to improved performance by examiners.

"Exam results can make a big difference to young people's careers and chances of getting to university. It is therefore right that students should be able to see how their papers and their futures are being marked," a departmental source said.

The decision was causing anxiety yesterday among examiners. George Turnbull, spokesman for the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, the largest of the examining boards, said disclosure of marked scripts could encourage litigation by disappointed candidates.

"That is what happens in the United States where a lot of cases end up in the courts. There is a possibility that we could end up with tick-box exams with multiple choice questions that can be marked

with less risk of legal challenge."

Mr Turnbull said the boards would follow instructions from the Government, but ministers should be made aware of the pitfalls. The First Office would be the main beneficiary of a system that would require 20 million pieces of GCSE and A level assessment to be returned to schools.

Education Department sources said no decisions had been made on whether scripts should be returned to schools or made available at an inspection centre supervised by the boards.

There was no reason to assume that disclosure of marked scripts would lead to an increase in appeals or litigation. When a similar reform was introduced 10 years ago in New Zealand there was a reduction in appeals. Greater transparency would bolster confidence in the marking system and provide better feedback for teachers about the reasons why pupils are marked down, the sources said.

● A £30 million fund to encourage universities to admit more students from disadvantaged backgrounds was proposed yesterday by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Young people from the wealthiest backgrounds were 12 times more likely to enter higher education than those from the poorest families. "We must be careful not to penalise institutions for failing to be socially inclusive simply because they have particular entry requirements, the council said. "But it appears that institutions could do more to recruit appropriately qualified students from poorer backgrounds."

Universities and colleges would be asked to set targets for increasing numbers of poor and disabled students. The council is consulting on plans to pay a bonus to cover the extra costs of ensuring that such students complete their courses successfully.

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Leeson receives cancer reprieve

Luke Harding

THE fortunes of the jailed rogue trader Nick Leeson shifted dramatically last night when it emerged that his cancer had not spread as far as was first thought.

Surgeons yesterday said he stood a 70 per cent chance of surviving the next five years after a successful operation to remove a tumour last week.

Leeson, who had cancer of the colon diagnosed this month, will not need chemotherapy, his British solicitor said.

Doctors treating him in Singapore have found that his cancer has not spread to the lymph nodes, as was feared. But they believe he still faces a 30 per cent chance of the cancer recurring in the next two years.

Leeson, who is serving a 6½-year sentence for fraud after bringing down Barings, Britain's oldest merchant bank, was visited five days ago by the High Commission's vice-consul, Sue Cronin. He was able to sit up in bed and told her he was "recovering well". "He was very chatty," a source said.

Leeson's solicitor, Stephen Pollard, yesterday described the doctors' prognosis as "not as good as we had hoped, nor as bad as we had feared". His Singaporean lawyer, John Koh, has lodged a plea for his early release on compassionate grounds.

Leeson's fate rests in the hands of Singapore's ailing president, Ong Teng Chong, who himself has lymphatic cancer. After complaining of acute stomach pains, Leeson was this month moved from Changi prison to a secure ward in a public hospital, where one report suggested he was still kept in leg chains.

Gordon McVie, director general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said he was "pretty good". But bowel cancer often returned several years after treatment and was notoriously difficult to cure. "It is quite difficult to get rid of it completely," he said. "But if it all goes OK there is a reason why someone in Nick Leeson's position could not be back to work in three months," he said.

A person would be in serious trouble if cancer cells had spread to their liver, he added. Four days after Leeson's diagnosis, surgeons removed the tumour and a large part of his intestine. Further examinations were made last week to determine whether the cancer had spread and if more operations would be needed.

Since Leeson's illness became public it has emerged that his father, William, has cancer of the blood, the disease which killed his mother, Anne. Mr Leeson is too ill to visit his son in Singapore.

If the authorities turn down Leeson's request for compassionate release, the former futures trader is unlikely to emerge from jail before next July, when he is eligible for parole.

School on the ocean wave for yacht exam girls

Geoffrey Gibbs

DISTANCE learning will take on a whole new meaning for teenagers Suzie and Sophie Edington when the summer holidays are over and the hard work of a new school year begins.

This morning their family's home-made yacht will slip its moorings in Plymouth at the start of an epic voyage that will take them and their parents, Pete and Solly, 200 miles up an African river and on to Australia via the Panama Canal and the Pacific Islands.

The Edingtons' 56ft yacht,

Loquax, is packed with hi-tech communications equipment that will enable the two girls to continue with their A level and GCSE studies via the Internet.

Sailing via the Canaries, the family plan to arrive off the coast of West Africa in early November before travelling up the Gambia river to deliver medical equipment needed by surgeons carrying out sight-restoring operations.

"All being well, there will be some people who see us leave who were not able to see us arrive," Pete Edington said yesterday as he made final preparations.

The Edingtons, who come from Broseley, near Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire, designed the Loquax themselves and launched it in 1992 with a voyage to the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

The 14½-tonne, fibre glass hulled yacht comes equipped with shower rooms, washing machine and video player as well as the satellite phones that will allow the girls to communicate via lap-top computers with their teachers back home.

The Internet link with Cranford community college in Hounslow, west London, has been set up by RM, a specialist IT supplier to

schools, which is helping sponsor the voyage. Mr Edington, aged 47, a business management lecturer, said the family was looking forward to the 15,000-mile journey with excitement and some trepidation.

"We are a little nervous but are looking forward to doing something for someone else along the way. We are also going to have some fun. With the one-to-one tuition they will get, the girls will probably work about eight to 10 hours a week on their computers."

The family expects to reach Australia in October next year.



The Edington family aboard the Loquax. PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL SLATER

Atomic plant fined £22,000 for plutonium contamination

Stuart Miller

THE Government's atomic weapons factory was yesterday fined £22,000 after an accident in which two workers were contaminated with plutonium.

James Birch and Martin Tuleen inhaled radioactive particles as they inspected cleaning work on redundant equipment at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, Berkshire.

Radiation levels in the laboratory were reported to be so high after the incident that Health and Safety Executive officials were unable to carry

out an inspection for more than two months.

AWF plc, the parent company, and Hunting Brae Ltd, the site licensee, admitted liability for the accident on December 16 last year, which prompted the first HSE prosecution against Aldermaston for a leak of radioactive plutonium.

After the hearing, Peter O'Connor, an HSE spokesman, said: "We wanted a conviction and we got one, so we are naturally satisfied. The prosecution and the penalties reflect the seriousness of the incident and we hope that the case serves as a lesson to other companies."

Baby bewildered but unharmed

Two-day ordeal on hillside for a 'tough kid'

David Ward on the remarkable escape of 13-month-old Liam Evans

THE 13-month-old boy found 1,200ft up a Welsh hillside after a car accident in which his grandfather was killed had had an amazing escape, police said yesterday.

It emerged that Liam Evans, described by doctors as "a tough kid", had probably spent two nights and almost two days alone and without food or drink in the heather next to the body of his grandfather on the Horseshoe Pass above Llangollen. The car had come to a halt beside a 200ft precipice.

As Liam was discharged after a night in hospital, post-mortem results showed that Gwilym Evans, a 61-year-old retired police officer, had died from a brain haemorrhage caused by a fractured skull.

Grandfather and grandson had left home on Thursday for a drive into the hills and a nationwide search was launched when they failed to return home to Old Colwyn on the north Wales coast, 40 miles from the crash scene.

Liam was found grimy and in tears on Sunday by a 10-year-old boy who saw the car partly hidden in the heather. He was flown to hospital and detained for observation.

North Wales police said the car had plunged 150 yards down a slope and was stopped on the edge of the precipice by bracken and foliage. Liam might have been thrown from the car as it rolled down the slope.

"Someone must have been looking after Liam," said Detective Superintendent Eric Jones. "That is the nearest I can get to an explanation."



Gwilym Evans: crashed on hill drive with grandson



Matthew Williams: found Liam at the crash site

said there was no evidence that another car had been involved.

Matthew Williams, aged 10, from Heswall on the Wirral, described how he stumbled on the accident as he explored the hill with his grandfather.

"I just saw this car and went to look and then I heard the baby crying," he said. "I couldn't see it because the ferns were high and it was covered."

"I went and told my gran-

dad and he didn't believe it at first and then we went to find [Liam]. I was with Liam all the time while my granddad went for help. He had mud on his face and dirty feet. I was asking his name and whether he could talk. I felt a bit scared because I hadn't really done this before."

As Liam, wearing a T-shirt and dungarees, sat on the lap of his mother, Ruth Evans, she paid tribute to her father-in-law. "Our family has lost a very special man who we all loved dearly," she said.

She described how she and her husband, Gary, had feared for their son's safety. "There was hope and there was despair," she said. "We were trying to come to terms with it, the fact that we might never see Liam again."

She said Liam was bewildered when they were reunited. "He was very, very dirty and a bit unsure of what was going on. He just wanted a hug from everybody."

"We have mixed emotions but it is over now. He is home with us. A tragedy has happened. It will take a lot to get through but with this little chap back we will get over it."

Duncan Cameron, a consultant paediatrician at Gran Clwyd hospital near Aberystwyth, said Liam had cuts and scratches and showed signs of exposure when admitted but he had survived remarkably well. Dr Cameron did not expect any lasting psychological damage.

He said staff were "shocked" when Liam arrived at the hospital by police helicopter. "We were all in casualty and the nurses were crowded round this little chap looking absolutely bewildered on the trolley... It would have needed a crowbar to get the first drink of milk we gave him away from him."

"He had signs of exposure and was dirty and distressed... But he was well enough to be discharged. He must be a tough kid."



Liam Evans with his mother Ruth, after two days on a hillside by the body of his grandfather PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE KENDALL

'I saw this car and went to look and then I heard the baby crying. I was with Liam all the time while my granddad went for help. I felt a bit scared because I hadn't really done this before'

Matthew Williams, aged 10

'There was hope and there was despair. We were trying to come to terms with it, the fact that we might never see Liam again'

Ruth Evans, Liam's mother

Push button voting moves a step nearer

Government considers sweeping reforms to the electoral process

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

SWEEPING changes to the way people vote — including weekend polls and push button voting machines — are likely to be made by the Government, it was announced yesterday.

A working party, chaired by George Howarth, a junior Home Office minister, is recommending the widespread testing of new ways of voting to increase turnout.

Supermarket and Post Office polling booths and mobile ballot boxes are to be tested following recommendations by the working party set up by the Government last year.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, is expected to argue for a bill to be introduced in the next Queen's Speech to allow experiments next year.

Local elections are currently fixed by law to take place on the first Thursday in May. Ministers hope that switching polling day to the

weekend could raise the number of people taking part, now fallen to less than a third of those eligible.

Electronic voting is also being considered. Voters would press a button or pull a lever instead of marking a cross on a ballot paper. This would speed up polling and the counting of votes.

The working group recommends that the electoral register should be updated on a rolling basis, rather than just once a year as it is now, to ensure that as many people as possible are able to vote.

Other changes proposed include better provision for disabled voters, letting people vote wherever they like

within their constituencies and even opening some polling stations a few days before elections for people who were going to be away on polling day.

Ministers have already decided to introduce a series of changes in advance of legislation this year. These will include guidance on encouraging voter participation; more flexibility in the use of official poll cards; better co-ordination of election publicity; and simpler electoral forms.

"We want answers to what happened and why this equipment failed the men so miserably," she said.

Campaigners have written to 2,500 owners of British fishing vessels over 10 metres long asking them each to auction a box of fish for the salvage fund. Fishermen's organisations in Europe and

work has been carried forward in a spirit of co-operation and with a strong degree of consensus," he said.

Meetings of the working party will be held later this year and early next year to look at the sale of the electoral register, security issues, types of automated voting, rolling registration, and civic education — including encouraging more young people to vote.

By Easter, ministers will have a full picture. They will also receive Lord Neill's report on the funding of political parties next month and recommendations from Lord Jenkins of Hillhead on electoral reform in October.

Servant proves more than the equal of his master

Review

Michael Billington

Mr Puntilla and His Man Matti
Traverse, Edinburgh

"HERE comes Bertolt Brecht and we expect your essays to be handed in by Friday."

runs the little ditty, sung to a ukulele, at the start of the show. But the joy of Kathryn Hunter's production, jointly presented by comedy duo The Right Size and the Almeida Theatre, is that uninhibited theatricality displaces school-room didacticism.

Lee Hall's version of Brecht's 1940s Finnish folk tale certainly gets across the basic point: that rich landowner Puntilla is a bullying martinet when sober and a reckless philanthropist when drunk. In his cups he treats his chauffeur Matti as an equal, offers him the hand of his daughter Eva and hires communists and cripples to work on his estate: in the cold light of sobriety he reverts to

the role of class tyrant, verbally mauling Matti, seeking to hitch Eva to a milkshop diplomat and sacking reds and rebels.

Brecht's argument is that we should be masters of our own affairs. But Hall's highly intelligent version also makes it not just a play about the boss class's Jekyll and Hyde dualities but about human responsibility. Puntilla's vice is a refusal to accept the consequences of his actions. It is the level-headed Matti who constantly points out that promises are nothing without contracts, and who demonstrates to Eva the deprivations of marriage to an underling.

But the great thing is that the ideas are always expressed in highly theatrical terms. Hunter's production is designed by Tim Hatley in a style vividly reminiscent of Lucie Cabrol. A long wooden board becomes a mobile table propped up by its occupants at various drunken, skew-whiff angles. The panels in the back wall open up to admit vistas of Finnish birch trees, and in a sensational final coup, the panels peel over like dominoes to evoke Mount Hatelma.

the site of Puntilla's dubious utopian ravings.

Hamish McColl and Sean Foley as Puntilla and Matti also confirm that comes often make very good actors. McColl replaces Puntilla's traditional fatness with a manic, driven wiriness, whether telling boom-boom jokes, engaging himself to every girl in the village or swigging from bottles as if they were natural extensions of his arm; he has, in fact, the dangerous unpredictability of a domesticated Arturo Ui.

Foley also conveys Matti's mixture of sense and sensuality. He listens to his master's drunken promises with a blank-eyed wariness and augurs he has the bots for Eva while realising marriage would be a disaster. Hayley Carmichael's sexually aroused Eva, Joy Richardson's politically astute Moonshine Emma and Harry Gostelow's limp attaché add to the Breughelian canvas. And Hunter's production, which tours to Liverpool, Oxford and Coventry before coming to the Almeida, roffirms once again that Brecht can be a source of enlightened fun.

Grieving relatives launch cash appeal to recover sunken Cornish trawler

Geoffrey Gibbs

GRIEVING relatives of the crew of a Cornish trawler lost in mysterious circumstances off the south-west coast nine months ago have launched an international appeal to pay for the vessel to be recovered from the sea bed.

The newly registered Margaretha Maria went down

without warning 70 miles south of Land's End last November with the loss of all four men on board.

Its wreck was discovered this year after the body of skipper Robbie Holmes was trawled up in the nets of another Newlyn vessel. The bodies of the three fishermen have not been recovered.

Relatives of the four men say they want the Margaretha

Maria recovered to establish why safety equipment on the vessel failed.

The 70ft trawler left Newlyn in calm seas on November 11. It was not until it failed to return three days later that the trawler was raised.

Launching the appeal in Penzance yesterday, Moira Todd, who lost her husband John, aged 46, and son Kerry, 24, said it was hoped to raise

£500,000 in time for an autumn salvage attempt.

"We want answers to what happened and why this equipment failed the men so miserably," she said.

Campaigners have written to 2,500 owners of British fishing vessels over 10 metres long asking them each to auction a box of fish for the salvage fund. Fishermen's organisations in Europe and

Canada are also being asked in help.

The other crew member was Vincent Marshall, a father of three.

The wreck was located in March by an unmanned submarine from the Royal Navy minehunter HMS Croomer. A report is expected this year from the marine accident investigation branch of the Department of Transport.

Activists urged to allow badger cull for TB tests

James Melkie

THE Government last night appealed to animal activists not to disrupt a limited cull of badgers designed to test links between tuberculosis in animals, cattle and humans.

The food safety minister Jeff Rooker insisted the action, involving the killing of up to 12,000 badgers over five years, was needed to help check that the food chain was protected from infected milk and meat.

He appealed to landowners, including conservation groups such as the National Trust, to co-operate. But badger welfare groups said they were bitterly disappointed by the decision.

Mr Rooker confirmed that public health laboratories would step up monitoring a strain of TB that can be caught from cattle and badgers and was thought to afflict about 40 people a year. The proposals follow a rapid rise in TB in cattle.

There were confirmed cases in 334 herds in the first six months of the year, compared with 516 in the whole of 1997 and 143 in 1990. The disease is spreading north from the South-west of England.

Badgers were a significant source of infection in cattle, according to advisers. Research would look at other factors including climate and geography and management of livestock, while farmers would get full compensation for cattle killed because they had TB.

Experiments will start in Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The total area involved in all tests is said to be less than half the area of Cornwall.

Culling since the 1970s has failed to establish conclusively the causal link between badger and bovine TB.

John Bourne, former professor of animal health at Bristol, will lead the team monitoring the experiments. Elaine King, conservation officer for the National Feder-

ation of Badger Groups, said: "There is no justification for going ahead with the culling experiment. Most badgers will not be infected with TB. Sows start to give birth in December so there will be a lot with cubs underground who are likely to die."

The National Farmers' Union said: "Controlled culling is needed if the nation's cattle population is not to be placed under threat," but Brian Jennings, chair of its animal health and welfare committee warned of financial ruin facing farming families not in culling zones.

"The Pain family who farm near Torquay in south Gloucestershire fear by next month they may have lost three-quarters of their 80 dairy cattle to TB."

Tim Pain, who has two young children, said: "If they do not do something now it will be worse than BSE."

His wife said compensation to date was "minimal". The situation is dire. We don't want to wipe out badgers but we have to get to the bottom of this."



Up to 12,000 badgers are to be killed in the next five years in a research project designed to test the suspected link between tuberculosis in the animals, in cattle and in humans PHOTOGRAPH: JACK A BAILEY

Scientists crack influenza virus attack mechanism

Tim Radford
Science Editor

SCIENTISTS think they have found the trigger that converts the influenza virus into a killing machine.

New strains of flu appear regularly to kill thousands in Britain every winter, usually the very old, the very young or the already very ill. Every now and then a far more virulent strain emerges, taking hundreds of thousands of lives worldwide. Even more infrequently influenza turns into a mass killer. In 1918 the "Spanish influenza" epidemic is believed to have killed 40 million people.

Researchers believe the virus mutates as it spreads from one species to another, especially in places like southern China, where chickens, pigs and humans all live closely together. But no one has worked out what makes the virus mild one year and more virulent the next.

Now two virologists at the University of Wisconsin-Mad-

ison think they have found an answer. Influenza normally only attacks respiratory systems. Hideo Goto and Yoshihiro Kawakita report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences today that they have found the machinery that gives the virus its deadly ability sometimes to attack other organs.

Viruses multiply by hijacking and getting the body's cells to "copy" them. But to do this, they first have to stick to the cell and then prise it open to get in. The flu virus coat has a protein that must be cut, as if with scissors, by an enzyme before it can infect the cell — and these enzyme scissors are normally found in the lungs and the throat.

But the two Wisconsin-Madison scientists examined an unusual flu virus — a laboratory favourite related to the 1918 killer, which can be grown in the brains of mice — and discovered another viral surface protein that could be converted into a key that would open any cell, rather than just the breath machinery.

White House aides could pay a high price for keeping the faith



Prosecutor Kenneth Starr sets off for Washington yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: LARRY DOWNING

Bill's loyalists/ If the president changes his story, he won't be alone as he eats his words, writes Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL CLINTON finally took his reputation into his own hands yesterday, seven months after the Monica Lewinsky allegations were revealed in a small story on the front page of the Washington Post. Until yesterday's testimony, the president had said nothing substantive about the Lewinsky affair since his dramatic denial at a White House education policy launch on January 26, when he told the press: "I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time."

But as Mr Clinton fought once again to save his political life in front of the grand jury secured by the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, he was not the only one whose career and credibility was on the line.

There is barely a person in the whole Clinton White House who has not been touched by the events of the past seven months. Several, ranging from his senior political advisers Bruce Lindsey, John Podesta and Sidney Blumenthal through to his secretary Betty Currie, his steward Bayani Nevis, and his bodyguard Larry Cockerell, have had their lives transformed by subpoenas to give evidence to the same grand jury.

Some, notably Mrs Currie and the Oval Office operations director, Nancy Herrreich, have given evidence five or six times. Close friends of the president like the Washington lawyer Vernon Jordan, a four-time visitor to the grand jury, and the Hollywood filmmaker Harry Thomason, who was subpoenaed for the first time only last week, have not been exempt either.

For the most part, these aides and friends have testified unwillingly and in a atmosphere of defiance characteristic of a political bunker under attack.

Their mood was well summarised by the ultra-cool Mr Jordan, who appeared at one of his grand jury sessions to announce: "I kept the faith."

Perhaps the toughest job of all, though, has been that of the Clinton aides and supporters who have had to issue denials for the president and to articulate the White House view of the saga. Those denials collapsed yesterday when Mr Clinton was expected to alter his story.

Mr Clinton is therefore not the only one who is haunted by his earlier words. This protector guard of political allies and spin doctors now has statements to explain,

too. And in some case reputations to rescue. As ever throughout his turbulent career, the president's principal defender has been his wife Hillary.

Like the president, she has kept fairly quiet in public about the affair since the early days. But she electrified the already frenzied argument about the Lewinsky story when she went on NBC television on January 27 to allege that there was a "vast rightwing conspiracy" against her husband's presidency — a claim which has stood the test of time.

Last week she broke a long silence on the affair by telling the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette newspaper in Mr Clinton's home state that she also saw an anti-Arkansas bias in Mr Starr's long investigations. "I think a lot of this is prejudice against our state," said Mrs Clinton, who was born in Illinois. "They wouldn't be doing this if we were from some other state."

Mrs Clinton has gathered fresh respect and popularity as the months have passed. During Mr Clinton's first term, she was a political bogeywoman, especially in rightwing circles, but also among the public.

Midway through his troubled second term, she is widely seen as a dignified and calm counterpoint to the hysteria that so often surrounds the president himself.

In her NBC interview Mrs Clinton said: "I guess I've just been through it so many times. I mean Bill and I have been accused of everything, including murder, by some of

the very same people who are behind these allegations."

But in the same interview she also gave a hostage to fortune which has been frequently replayed in the last few days. She was asked by her interviewer: "If an American president had an adulterous liaison in the White House and lied to cover it up, should the American people ask for his resignation?"

Mrs Clinton replied: "Well, they should certainly be concerned about it. If all that were proven true, I think that would be a very serious offence. That is not going to be proven true."

Mrs Clinton is one of the few people in the White House who is protected from snipery, as a result of "spousal privilege". She has therefore been able to play an unfettered role as one of the tightly knit group of legal advisers helping to plan the president's latest strategy.

But she is not the only one to have put her head on the block for the president's earlier denials. On the day that the Lewinsky story broke, the tough but affable White House press secretary, Mike McCurry, read a statement to reporters which said: "The president is outraged by these allegations. He's never had any improper relationship with this woman. He's made it clear from the beginning that he wants people to tell the truth in all matters."

Five days later Mr McCurry was questioned about one of Mr Clinton's own denials. "Every American that heard him knows exactly what he meant with the question. He didn't leave any ambiguity in it whatsoever. He said 'I did not have any sexual relations with that woman'. He couldn't have been clearer."

Aides like the White House counsellor Paul Begala and the senior adviser Rahm Emanuel are among the inner group of political staff who have also gone on television since the crisis broke to repeat Mr Clinton's denials.

"America knows exactly what he means," Mr Begala said in January. "He did not have a sexual relationship with this woman."

"Did he have sex?" Mr Emanuel said on April 5. "No. Sexual relations? No."

Another defender was James Carville, a larger-than-life presidential adviser who can be counted on some of the saltiest allegations against Mr Starr.

"The president knows what improper means," Mr Carville said on January 25. "Yes, it means any kind of sex."

As Mr Clinton changes his version of events, these loyalists will be asked to defend him on new grounds. Many of them will stick with him, though Mr McCurry is quitting.

But they will all have to endure rough treatment from the media, who will want to know whether anything they say can be trusted again.

the very same people who are behind these allegations."

But in the same interview she also gave a hostage to fortune which has been frequently replayed in the last few days. She was asked by her interviewer: "If an American president had an adulterous liaison in the White House and lied to cover it up, should the American people ask for his resignation?"

Mrs Clinton replied: "Well, they should certainly be concerned about it. If all that were proven true, I think that would be a very serious offence. That is not going to be proven true."

Mrs Clinton is one of the few people in the White House who is protected from snipery, as a result of "spousal privilege". She has therefore been able to play an unfettered role as one of the tightly knit group of legal advisers helping to plan the president's latest strategy.

But she is not the only one to have put her head on the block for the president's earlier denials. On the day that the Lewinsky story broke, the tough but affable White House press secretary, Mike McCurry, read a statement to reporters which said: "The president is outraged by these allegations. He's never had any improper relationship with this woman. He's made it clear from the beginning that he wants people to tell the truth in all matters."

Five days later Mr McCurry was questioned about one of Mr Clinton's own denials. "Every American that heard him knows exactly what he meant with the question. He didn't leave any ambiguity in it whatsoever. He said 'I did not have any sexual relations with that woman'. He couldn't have been clearer."

Aides like the White House counsellor Paul Begala and the senior adviser Rahm Emanuel are among the inner group of political staff who have also gone on television since the crisis broke to repeat Mr Clinton's denials.

"America knows exactly what he means," Mr Begala said in January. "He did not have a sexual relationship with this woman."

"Did he have sex?" Mr Emanuel said on April 5. "No. Sexual relations? No."

Another defender was James Carville, a larger-than-life presidential adviser who can be counted on some of the saltiest allegations against Mr Starr.

"The president knows what improper means," Mr Carville said on January 25. "Yes, it means any kind of sex."

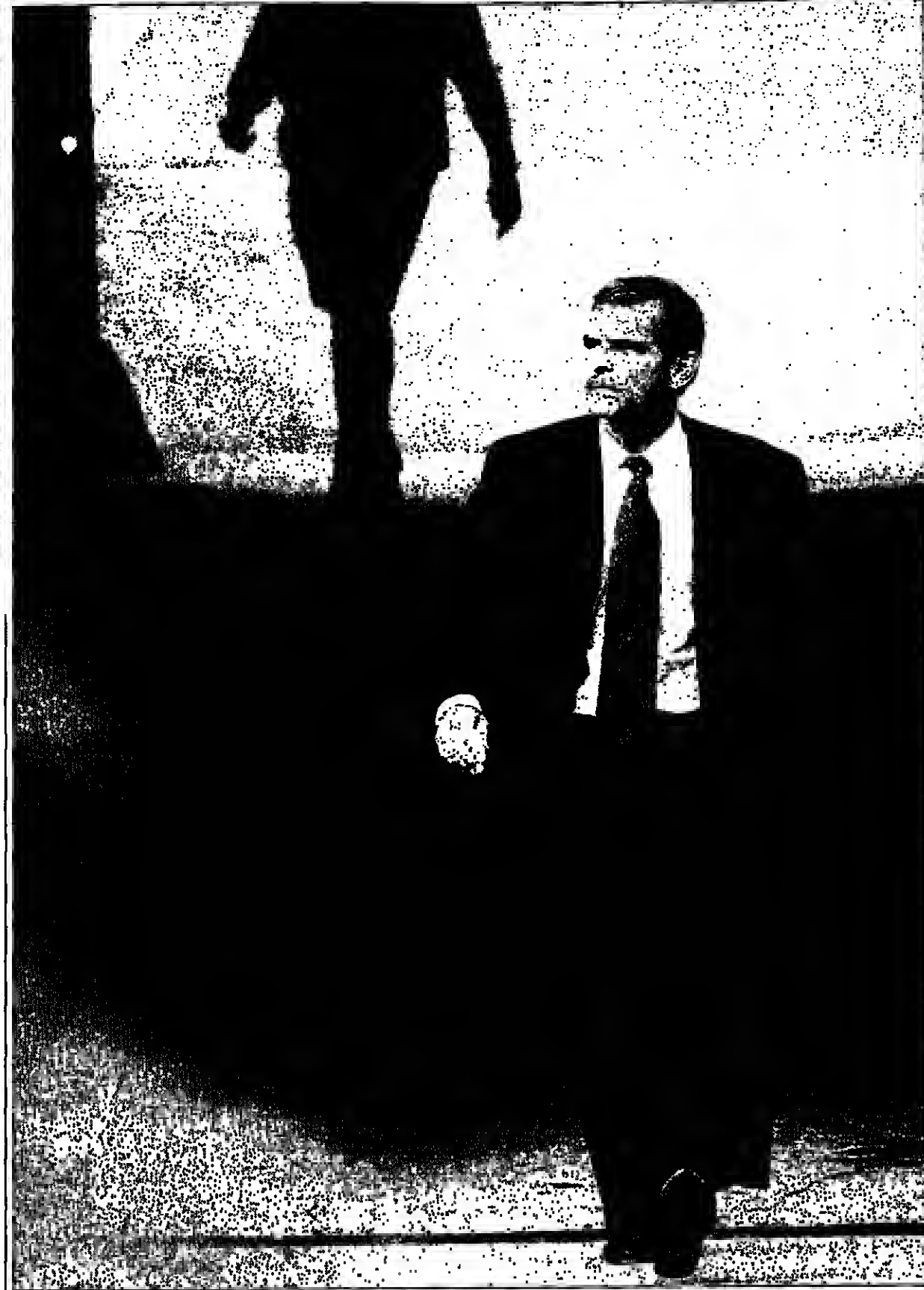
As Mr Clinton changes his version of events, these loyalists will be asked to defend him on new grounds. Many of them will stick with him, though Mr McCurry is quitting.

But they will all have to endure rough treatment from the media, who will want to know whether anything they say can be trusted again.

bring indictments or, in some cases, make statements, usually reports about broad categories of wrongdoing.

This grand jury is unusual in that it no longer has the second function, because it is an unresolved legal question whether a sitting president can be indicted. Mr Starr's intention to report his conclusions to Congress effectively sidesteps that issue.

In recent decades grand juries have earned a reputation for rubber-stamping prosecutorial decisions. Those that decline to follow a prosecutor's lead to indict are sometimes called "runaway" grand juries. — New York Times.



Bruce Lindsey, the president's friend and adviser, on his way to the White House yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH FREEMAN

'You know when you're having sex'

The people's view/ Curiosity is overcoming reticence to hear the seedy details, writes Gary Younge

STUDENT and waiter Clyde Harris laughed and shook his head at the same time. Like the rest of Washington he cannot wait for the Monica Lewinsky scandal to end, and like many others in the capital, he is equally desperate to hear when it does because he has no idea how it will unravel.

"Do I believe the president could have oral sex that many times and yet not understand that to mean 'sexual relations'?" he asked.

"You know when you're having sex. That's the whole point," Natalie Fletcher said. "I

don't want to know because it's his own business and it's all gotten kind of seedy. But this thing's been going on for so long now that I must admit I am kind of curious."

The capital's airwaves, newspaper columns and dinner conversations yesterday buzzed with rumours that the testimony by President Bill Clinton would contain a partial confession and might be followed by a televised explanation.

President Clinton was appearing on two television monitors before the federal grand jury at the United States courthouse. Outside the skyline was punctuated with the satellite dishes

beaming news of the the scandal, leak by leak, dribble by dribble, over the past seven months.

Across the road a crane hoisted a cameraman above the proceedings as he sought one more angle on the only story in town. On the ground were the television cameras, staffed by men in shorts, drinking coffee and trying not to look too bored.

They call this Monica's beach. It sits in the shadow of Capitol Hill, the place where Congress will peruse Mr Starr's final report and then resolve to either drop the matter or push on with impeachment proceedings.

A few blocks away in Pennsylvania Avenue is the White House, where the president was speaking to a camera in the presence of his lawyer.

There was no photo-opportunities of a harassed

Mr Clinton scintillating through a back door surrounded by minders, as with Ms Lewinsky, no in-prompt press conferences on the steps of the courthouse, as with Linda Tripp.

On one of the most crucial days for the Clinton presidency nothing very much, that anyone could see, happened at all. In the absence of anything substantial the television lawyers, political pundits and regional news anchors kept talking.

"Somebody's got to be lying. That much I know," said Barbara Gynon. "Personally, I think he's got to be lying because he's got most to lose. But since men lie about sex all the time, I think it's bad, but not that amazing. If he asked her to lie that's a little bit different, but it doesn't seem that he did," she said.

In this staunchly Democratic town most people appeared to be disappointed by the behaviour of their president.

Like most of their compatriots, if the polls are to be believed, they reckon he did it, that he was wrong, and that everyone should move on to more pressing affairs. But like most, it also troubles them that he may have shown such poor judgment.

Whatever his relationship was with Ms Lewinsky, their relationship with him will never quite be the same again.

"He's the only one who knows. We don't know. He knows," said Mr Harris.

"Now if it was me, I would like to think that I wouldn't do that in the first place."

"But if I was stupid enough to do it, I don't think I would be stupid enough to admit it too."

Others are not so high minded. For three years Ed Morris, a teacher at Walt Whitman high school in Bethesda, Maryland, greeted his students after the summer holidays by passing out a slip of paper with the question: "Is O.J. Guilty?" Now a new question awaits his students: "Is Bill Guilty?" — New York Times.

exclusive secondary school whose alumni include the vice-president, Al Gore, said he was bracing himself for awkward moments when his students return next month, because "We've never gotten into the thick and dirty of the Lewinsky business. We'll have to handle it without wallowing in detail."

of motivation and the extent of activity and there is a significant difference," he said. He said of the Lewinsky scandal: "It's like world war one. What triggered it? Was world war one about militarisation? About German aspirations? Is this about a land deal? Is it about FBI files? It is about the travel office. It's

ing, even as an immorality tale, whichever it is."

Gary Rnss, a Hollywood screenwriter who wrote the satire Dave, about a phillanderer president replaced by a look-alike, said: "I'm surprised and shocked that we're actually talking about this sort of thing in public as it relates to the president. Doesn't it shock and horrify you?"

Tom Carolan, who teaches American government and citizenship at St Albans, an

about all those things, and it's destabilised the presidency."

However concerned people were that the scandal had diminished the presidency, the former Senator John Danforth said, nothing could be more important than Mr Clinton's grand jury appearance.

"This is more important than policy," he said. "If what comes out of this is, 'We don't really care, we don't want to be bothered', then that is a terrible, terrible outcome."

"If what comes out is, 'This is wrong and we know it's wrong and we're willing to forgive it but we don't want it to happen again', then I think we have vindicated ourselves as a people who believe in something."

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"Weird people emerge and then vanish months later. Linda Tripp, I guess, will end up becoming a trivia question"

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Grand jurors play symbolic part

Neil Lewis

WHEN President Clinton's image appeared on a television screen on the third floor of the federal courthouse yesterday, the 23 grand jurors in the room were expected to have only a small role to play. The presence of the grand jury gave the event symbolic and legal gravity, but the jurors were little more than a backdrop, because it was unlikely that they would be asked to vote or pass judgment on issues covered by President Clinton's testimony.

This is because Kenneth Starr, the independent coun-

sel, has said he will not have the grand jury consider whether to indict the president. His aides say he intends to draft a report to Congress, which will decide whether the facts warrant impeachment.

The grand jurors were entitled to ask questions of the president because, technically, they were conducting the investigation. But it was expected that even if they did, the event would be run mainly by the prosecutors.

Most grand juries serve two functions: investigating under the direction of prosecutors and deciding what to make of the investigation. As part of the second function they may

bring indictments or, in some cases, make statements, usually reports about broad categories of wrongdoing.

This grand jury is unusual in that it no longer has the second function, because it is an unresolved legal question whether a sitting president can be indicted. Mr Starr's intention to report his conclusions to Congress effectively sidesteps that issue.

In recent decades grand juries have earned a reputation for rubber-stamping prosecutorial decisions. Those that decline to follow a prosecutor's lead to indict are sometimes called "runaway" grand juries. — New York Times.

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A trader sits at his computer in Moscow's Interbank Currency Exchange yesterday, when Russia announced a devaluation and a suspension of debt repayment. PHOTOGRAPH: SERGEI KAPURKIN

Bonn braced for the first shockwaves

Germany, the biggest creditor, has most to lose from the freeze on repayments, report Mark Atkinson and Ian Traynor

Russia's financial crisis could send shockwaves around the globe if it escalates into a crisis of confidence in emerging markets, but the immediate impact is expected to be felt in Germany. Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Bonn was "concerned" about yesterday's news. Germany is Russia's biggest creditor and has most to lose from a freezing of foreign debt repayments. But he added that the decision to push ahead with the European single currency next year was having a stabilising effect on such regional economic crises even before the euro was launched.

He said he believed that the damage to the Russian economy was "reparable if the appropriate decisions are taken". A combination of loan guarantees from the German government and risk cover mean the big German commercial banks are relatively well insulated from the effects of Russia's debt repayment difficulties. More worrying is the possible knock-on effect of the Russian crisis on Eastern Europe and other emerging markets, where investors have become increasingly nervous about lending money in the wake of the Asian crisis. Ian Amstutz, international economist at the United States investment bank Bankers' Trust, said: "If you get an implosion in emerging markets generally, then that will have a big knock-on effect on Western stock markets. If Western stock markets collapse suddenly, then we are all in trouble." The US, in particular, has been growing rapidly on the back of strong consumer spending, fuelled by wealth gains due to rising stock prices. If the world's economic

engine — the US — goes into reverse, the expanding European economy would not be enough to sustain global economic growth. The Bank for International Settlements, based in Basel, says the big German banks have lent Russia \$18.5 billion. But Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank and Dresdner Bank were sanguine about falls in their share prices of up to 3 per cent in Frankfurt saying the real level of their risk exposure in Russia was a mere fraction of the overall lending figure. Commerzbank spokesman added that the bank did not hold any rouble-denominated credit and was not affected by Moscow's decision to freeze some foreign debt repayments for 90 days. "The action may help to stop the flight of capital [from Russia]," he said.

There could be a big knock-on effect on Western stock markets. If they collapse, we're all in trouble.

Of the \$18.5 billion, more than 90 per cent is covered by German government loan guarantees. Dresdner reported that most of its operations in Russia were with the subsidiaries of Western, not post-Soviet, companies. An estimated \$1 billion in German bank lending is believed to be seriously exposed, but of that up to 60 per cent is covered by the banks' own risk provisions. Bonn is pressing President Boris Yeltsin to implement reforms proposed by the International Monetary Fund, and improve tax collection and the government's fiscal base. If Russia defaults on its loans from German banks, government loan guarantees may mean that Germany's public finances are hit rather than the profits of the German banks.

Yeltsin's chickens are coming home to roost

Tom Whitehouse in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin was said to be considering changes to his government yesterday following the forced devaluation of the rouble and the suspension of Russia's foreign debt repayments. Mr Yeltsin has regularly sacked finance and economic ministers, sometimes reappointing them a year later, to disguise his own failure to halt economic collapse, but this time he will find it hard to escape responsibility. The governor of the Central Bank, Sergei Dubinin, has reportedly been asked to resign and the president's long-serving economics adviser, Alexander Livshits, handed in his resignation yesterday. Both had acted within the policy limits set by Mr Yeltsin and their departures signal no change in policy. Few candidates are willing to accept government positions during the economic crisis and the promotion of the

former finance minister Boris Fyodorov to the job of deputy prime minister probably signals that the changes will be cosmetic. It is only five months since Mr Yeltsin announced his last overhaul of the government, replacing his prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, with Sergei Kiriyenko, a 35-year-old former oil refinery manager. The provincial technocrat bolstered the reformist image of his government and complemented the youthful image provided by Boris Nemtsov, aged 37, and Anatoly Chubais, aged 42, the ministers for energy and international finance respectively. But their failure to plug the growing hole in the budget deficit ultimately caused the devaluation and has left Mr Yeltsin impaled on the horns of a potentially fatal dilemma. Either he stands by his government and accept responsibility for its failure or he announces a complete change of direction and brings in opposition forces from the Duma. In either case he has to admit defeat and could ruin his

chance of retaining the presidency in the elections due in 2000, or nominating his own successor. Dmitry Maslukov, the Communist head of parliament's economy committee, provides an example of this dilemma. His conditions for accepting the post of minister for trade and industry — an offer he received before the rouble crisis — included the re-establishment of state planning and total state control of foreign trade and internal economic policy. As one newspaper columnist joked yesterday: "Mr Maslukov wants to become minister for everything." Such conditions are clearly unacceptable to the remaining government members and would preface a reversal of seven years of economic policy. Instead Mr Yeltsin looks set to do what he does best, ignore reality and soldier on regardless. But he can no longer take the support of Russia's leading businessmen for granted. Their newspapers' condem-

nation of his handling of the crisis — which started with his refusal to interrupt his holiday because, he said, that would only make matters worse — may signal the beginning of a concerted campaign to force Mr Yeltsin to resign. The most plausible candidate to succeed him in an emergency government of national unity is Mr Chernomyrdin, whom the president sacked in March. But other would-be presidential candidates are also

making political capital from the impending financial collapse. Mr Yeltsin's former national security adviser, Alexander Lebed, who is now governor of the Krasnoyarsk region, said he was heading back to Moscow "to try and find out who rules the country". "The Russian government has signed its insolvency and admitted that the country is bankrupt," he said.

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Defiant Bhutto senses tide turning in her favour

Suzanne Goldenberg in Lahore

ASHEN-FACED, her lips moving in a constant, silent prayer and her eyes turned away from the bus and widely blamed for her downfall, Benazir Bhutto made her first court appearance yesterday in the most serious of the corruption cases against her. Despite her evident distress at the Lahore high court, the former Pakistani prime minister said in an interview at the weekend that she was "in recovery". Emerging from her despair, she is confronting head-on the corruption charges and political disgrace that only weeks ago appeared to have ended her career. In a typical week she shuttles between the corruption hearings — held with what seems to be deliberate inconvenience in three separate cities — and political rallies. She says she has encountered public sympathy and growing enthusiasm for her demand that the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, should give way to a government of national reconciliation. She says Mr Sharif has led Pakistan to the brink of economic disaster by bumbling a privatisation programme, a botching peace talks with India and failing to take account of the impact of the sanctions that followed the country's nuclear tests. "In some ways we resemble



Bhutto: In court yesterday but buoyed by public sympathy

the Soviet Union in its final years, where a military superpower, with all its airplanes and missiles and bombs, was collapsing because it could not sustain that empire," she said. "Our economy and our social basis can no longer sustain our desire to have an ambitious agenda." She claims to have learnt from her mistakes, but is coy about stating outright that she wants to be prime minister again, sensing that Pakistanis may not yet be ready to forgive her past excesses. "I would not look at it as a personal comeback," she said, "but as a party comeback, and a comeback for the country in the short term."

Such humility is rare in Ms Bhutto, and is not shared by her husband, Asif Zardari. Many Pakistanis believe he masterminded the scams for money and land which were the basis of the case against her. He is in jail on charges of murdering her brother, Murtaza. Arriving at the court in an armoured vehicle, Mr Zardari slipped the backs of well-wishers before settling in an armchair to swap jokes with his lawyer. Ms Bhutto barely spared him a glance before arguing in the court that her human rights were being violated. Yesterday's hearing was into accusations that the couple received millions of dollars in kickbacks from a Swiss firm. Ms Bhutto faces separate charges in other cities of tak-

ing kickbacks from a Polish tractor-maker, a local gold importer and Swiss companies. Her bank accounts in Pakistan were frozen in April. The couple's foreign accounts are the subject of investigations in Britain. Last month the Swiss authorities indicted Mr Zardari for money laundering. But politically the odds are turning slowly in Ms Bhutto's favour. Last week she led thousands in a protest against Mr Sharif's latest project, the \$2.5 billion Kalabagh Dam. To the people of Ms Bhutto's Sind province, the dam is a symbol of Mr Sharif's favouritism towards his native Punjab, the country's richest province and the recruitment ground for its army. The dam protest and the tumultuous weekend parade through Karachi afterwards which sealed an alliance between Ms Bhutto and the leaders of small and religious parties are crucial to her efforts. "Alliances aren't easy to carry, and this alliance isn't easy, but the nature of politics is such that I have to try to isolate the regime," she said. As ever, many believe her success in toppling Mr Sharif will hinge on the army, which has ruled Pakistan for half its 51 years. Although outwards the generals seem disinclined to rule directly, many argue that they could lose patience with Mr Sharif's profligacy, especially if economic problems lead to social unrest.

Catching up with the West finally takes its painful toll

Mark Atkinson Economics Correspondent

RUSSIA'S immediate crisis is one of confidence and liquidity — not enough money to pay its bills — but its origins are rooted in the country's painful transition to a market economy after the collapse of communism. Unlike Poland or the Czech Republic, which suffered sharp drops in output and employment followed by equally quick rebounds, Russia's economic reform process has been slow and painful. It has also been much tardier. Too tardy, according to those who believe that only free-market shock treatment can transform Russia from a command economy into a competitive modern state. They argue that, despite tumbling output after the fall of the Berlin Wall, firms have not shed employees out of misplaced social considerations and the privatisation programme has been, in some cases, purely nominal. The counter view is that the reform process has been too much, too soon. Unlike its neighbours in central and

Diamond producers scramble to secure hard currency from gems

RUSSIA'S multi-billion dollar diamond industry acted to secure hard-currency earnings from gem sales yesterday by asking the De Beers cartel to extend a provisional marketing deal into the next century, writes Dan Atkinson. The Russian diamond industry has spent much of the 1990s snatching De Beers and dumping stones on world markets in defiance of the South African

group, and yesterday's statement marks an abrupt about-turn, almost certainly triggered by Russia's mounting economic crisis. Almazay Rossi-Sakha, Russia's chief diamond producer, said its supervisory council, representing the governments of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sakha, had approved extending the one-year deal allowing De Beers to market Russian gems until 2001. tax revenue, forcing Boris Yeltsin's government to rely on foreign investors for capital by issuing GKO, government bonds that are in effect state-backed IOUs. In the wake of the Asian crisis, however, investors have become more risk averse, demanding exorbitantly high interest rates to lend money to financially suspect countries. Yesterday interest rates were up to 250 per cent, endangering the solvency of domestic banks and the funding of the public sector deficit. With its reserves of gold and foreign currency depleted by attempts to prop up the rouble, the Russian government has run short of cash to repay its debts. Unable to attract enough funds from wary investors, it was forced to go cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund, borrowing \$14 billion in July. Initially, it looked as though the IMF cash injection would cover all debt servicing costs for at least the year.

But the breathing space has turned out to be shorter than expected. Investors have continued to bail out of Russian assets, putting the country under pressure on the currency and making it more difficult to service foreign debts. Then George Soros's call for a devaluation, in a letter to the Financial Times last week, triggered a complete loss of confidence. The Russian authorities had little option but to devalue the rouble and attempt to restructure the debt repayments. On the positive side, devaluation will restore the country's international competitiveness by making its exports cheaper, which should boost its capital account. Oil companies in particular, which account for a big chunk of Russian GDP, are expected to benefit. If oil company earnings rise, the public authorities ought to be able to harvest more tax revenue, which will help to restore health to the public finances. But there are grave doubts about the ability of the Russian economy to rise to the challenge of exporting its way out of trouble as some of the Asian countries have done following devaluations. There are fears of a return to hyper-inflation as imports become more expensive. Professor Brian Henry, of the London Business School, said Russia's one big achievement of the past few years has been low inflation, which has gone down to 5 per cent. "The danger is that the jewel in the economic crown is lost if prices now go through the roof," he said. "You are talking about really serious social problems in that case — it's the nightmare scenario."

"Any time there was an outside broadcast unit in Yorkshire my father had to take me to some moorland peak to look at the link van." Richard Whiteley of Countdown

Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

NOTHING is more moving than a tale of aristocratic grandeur besieged by ill fortune. Last year the Duke of Somerset suffered the ignominy of having to grant public access to his country seat, Bradley House in Wiltshire, in return for tax concessions from the Inland Revenue. The arrangement was tolerable until so-called comedian Mark Thomas and his band of taxpaying mischief-makers unexpectedly descended on the estate demanding a right to snoop. The result was regrettable. More recently the Duke, while holidaying in Italy, learnt that Bradley House had caught fire. "Rays beaming through the windows," reported the *Times* last week, "were reflected from an 18 inch-high concave silver-topped table onto a sofa, starting a blaze." Thankfully no one was hurt, though, according to the *Times*, a Raphael painting did suffer smoke damage. Initial hopes that the insurance payout would be substantial have been disappointed. The Duke expressly told Mark Thomas, during his earlier visit, that the painting was "after Raphael" and "of no great value."

HERE is a coterie of top columnists at the *Daily Mail* who are not, we are told, being treated with the degree of respect to which they are accustomed. Last month Lynda Lee Potter gently bemoaned: "I'm so lacking in natural authority that I couldn't get into the *Daily Mail* yesterday without my pen." The Anne Robinson wouldn't have this trouble, I thought as I was forced to sign the book saying who I was and what time I arrived. "This should have been warning enough for the jobworthiness in security, but it has not been taken. Last week, the same fate befell the *Mail's* diarist Nigel Dempster — still rumoured to be upset about a regrettably unidentified scuffle with a member of his staff — who pointed out that he should have been told to sign in, being who he is. With characteristic wit he was heard to deliver the immortal words: "Do you know who I am?" The security man did not.

THE *Diary's* People-Friendly guide to New Labour Lexicon, running through August, is again forced to abandon attempts to secure what would have been its first meaningful definition. The phrase "equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome," considered by many to be a near perfect blend of political extremes wrapped up in one easily digestible truth, has been persistently lampooned by a small coterie of *Diary* readers bent on sabotaging our Guide. The final straw is a letter from Alison Adcock of Oxford who considers New Labour's approach to equality as "sink or swim: it's a race without handicaps and the devil takes the hindmost; it's survival of the fittest; it sorts out the men from the boys." This unconstructed stream of nonsense may earn you a bottle of Champagne, Alison, but a suitable definition it is not. This week's phrase under the microscope is the Blairism: "We need a new social morality."

HAVING done their bit to attract media attention to Irvine Welsh's new novel, *Filth*, by confiscating a promotional display from a bookshop window last week, Southampton police have now returned the posters — featuring a pig's head wearing a policeman's helmet — and are not pressing charges. As we reported on Friday, despite carrying the same allegedly offensive image on its cover, none of Welsh's books were taken away. The posters are now back in the window of October Books after Superintendent Wyeth returned them. In person, at the weekend.

THE Mirror Group's Live TV cable channel is moving up market. It will "run more sports programming, including stock racing and wrestling," reports MediaWeek. "The changes will be seen as a move away from the era of former Mirror TV boss Kelvin MacKenzie, who used shock tactics to attract viewers to the station." Topless darts and the cerebral News Bunny will remain.



The next terror weapon will be biological. And it could be used soon

Paul Rogers



IN ALL the 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland, the deliberate mass killing of civilians has been relatively rare. Before the Omagh bomb, there were some exceptions, notably the Loyalist bombs in Dublin and Monaghan in 1974, killing 30 people, and the Birmingham pub bombings later that year when 21 died. There have also been many instances of random shootings, and innumerable examples of people being caught up in attacks intended for others.

Mass murder has rarely served the political purposes of Northern Ireland paramilitaries, proving all too often to be counter-productive to their political aims. If it is proved that the Omagh massacre has this specific aim, it would plumb new depths in the conflict. It would also be a relatively rare example of such an attack in the wider world, where political violence is once again developing as a major force in international relations.

The death toll in the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bombings now exceeds 250, but these attacks were directed specifically at US interests, as have been many attacks throughout the Middle East, most notably Lebanon in the 1980s and more recently in Saudi Arabia.

Most non-state paramilitaries have very specific strategies and tactics, and they are frequently conservative in their methods, concentrating on particular actions, whether these be bombing, shooting, assassination, kidnapping or even knee-capping.

Even so, there are two trends in political violence which are becoming clear, and they do have major implications for the future. The first is economic targeting — the use of bombs and other

weapons to attack the weak points in a modern industrial state so as to maximise the economic damage.

The most sustained example of this was the Provisional IRA campaign in Britain, both before and after the 1994 ceasefire. Two bombs in the City of London, repeated disruption of road and rail services and attacks on electricity and gas supplies were early examples, followed later by Canary Wharf, Manchester and further motorway and rail disruption during the 1997 general election campaign. The City bombings, in particular, caused huge concern in financial and political circles, besides costing around £2 billion. They, and the other economic targeting, undoubtedly prompted the Major government to search harder for a peace settlement.

Economic targeting is likely to be an increasingly used tool of paramilitary groups, but the other trend is even more ominous — the willingness of some groups to attempt systematic killing to cause huge loss of life. Sometimes the two aims coincide: the Tamil Tiger attack on the Sri Lanka Central Bank in Colombo in January 1996 was intended to destroy the commercial heart of the city, but it also killed nearly 100 people and injured 1,400. Similarly, the Aum Shinrikyo nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system a few months earlier aimed to kill thousands of people and scare the population away from the mass transit system, with potentially devastating economic consequences.

The Tokyo attack failed in its main aim — the nerve agent was impure, the dispersal ineffective and only 12 people died, although 5,000 were affected. There have been similar "failures" with

other recent incidents. In December 1994, an Air France Airbus was hijacked by a militant Algerian group intending to crash the plane on Paris, killing themselves, the passengers and many people on the ground. They failed because a French commando unit stormed the plane at Marseille and killed the hijackers.

Perhaps the most indicative incident of all was the New York World Trade Centre bombing in 1993. Six people died and over a thousand were injured, but this was again an attack which failed in its real aim. The powerful truck bomb was placed in an underground car park and was intended to collapse the 110-storey North Tower over the Vista Hotel and into the South Tower. If it had succeeded, the death toll would have been 30,000, the worst single attack since the bombing of Nagasaki nearly 30 years earlier.

THE World Trade Centre bomb and the other examples show that there are circumstances in which mass killing is the specific aim, and the Tokyo subway attack was the first substantial example of the use of a weapon of mass destruction to cause such a loss of life. The fact that both incidents, as well as the Airbus hijacking, did not achieve their intended results, should not disguise the risks now becoming apparent.

The real change in all of this is still to come — the likely development and use of biological weapons by paramilitary groups. Iraq's remarkable ability to develop and deploy several different kinds of biological weapons in the late 1980s demonstrates that this is a technology that has already proliferated. At some stage, and probably quite soon, it is likely to be used.

A US military strategist, Roger Barnett, has commented that one of the main threats to Western power is "the impact of high-technology weapons and weapons of mass destruction on the ability — and thus the willingness — of the weak to take up arms against the strong". If he is right, then just as the United States and its allies believe that they have become the dominant players in international security, they may actually be losing control.

Even so, Western responses seek typically to protect the most important targets and destroy the paramilitary groups responsible. Whether this is in any sense possible remains to be seen, though the process will certainly give plenty of work to the plethora of terrorism experts who currently grace our airwaves.

Perhaps a better course of action would be to begin to pay attention to the root causes of insecurity, especially the deepening worldwide poverty divide, which are disseminating hundreds of millions of people and inciting some to extreme and devastating action.

The Omagh bomb arose out of the specific circumstance of generations of sectarian division, but elsewhere in the world, political violence is massively encouraged by systematic marginalisation. If the Omagh bomb is ultimately a result of a failure to heal the divided society of Northern Ireland, then the much larger risks we face from extreme paramilitary action in the world at large will stem mainly from our failure to address endemic injustice.

Paul Rogers is professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University

We're not a Trot plot

Hilary Wainwright



THE "silly season" can be a revealing one, too. Tom Sawyer's reaction to complaints over telephone voting, the first political event of this year's silly season, showed us that the New Labour mind-set is unable to face up to a real world in which dissident views are held by large numbers of people. Last week Sawyer dismissed the NEC state of the centre-left Grassroots Alliance, muttering darkly "we can't have these small groups..."

Thus revealing that this former champion of open intellectual debate (as a trade union official on Tyneside) now lives in a fantasy world where any sustained activity on the left is a Trot plot.

Millbank's general behaviour over the NEC elections reveals that what's new about New Labour is that it cannot live with Labour as a coalition. OK, Old Labour lags like Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan fought the left and even lapsed into cold war jibes at small groups of Communists but, in the end, they knew they had to deal with the left. In all its awkward variety it was a legitimate part of the party. New Labour, by contrast, appears permanently frozen in a cold war stance, just when, throughout society, intellectual and political debate is coming alive again.

This dogmatic and sectarian stance is damaging the party. People are leaving, drifting away or going in anger. In some areas, places on branch and constituency executives remain empty. People are losing the motivation to take on responsibility in a party whose leadership tries to rubbish them and their colleagues.

Many others, of course, are determined to win the party back — they supported Blair to win the election but not to hijack the party.)

THE leadership's hostility towards dissent is making the party out of touch with powerful radical energies in many unexpected quarters. The other week I was in Totnes for a particularly lively Any Questions — where, incidentally, the Tory, Steve Norris, was well to see the Labour representative Dave Hill, and better appreciated by the audience for being so. The next day I was invited to a meeting about direct action against genetic engineering. Over 300 people were there, on a scorching hot day, sufficiently motivated by political disobedience to defer the pleasures of the beach. Farmers, mothers, retired people, young students, there may even have been the odd Trot, though I suspect I was probably the nearest thing to such an exotic animal. It was organised in an exemplary

fashion, to test the support for direct action, to ensure it strengthened rather than isolated the local and national campaign to protect the safety of our food.

New Labour apparatchiks and No 10 policy wonks would find this combination of radical goals with careful, respectful democratic procedures inconceivable, just as they find it inconceivable that a broad coalition from the left and centre of the Labour Party could have been amassed to stand for the constituency seats on the NEC. Their problem is that too many of them have moved directly from a world of sectarian politics — whether as Communists, entryists, or obsessive opponents of entryists — to running a state or party machine. They don't know and cannot imagine the world of open-minded grassroots organising, with all its possibilities for mobilising powerful popular forces — whether in the days of the peace movement, the women's movement, radical trade unionism, defence of local services or more recently the direct action "do it yourself" green movement. It is a continually changing but influential force that will never be adequately represented in mainstream politics until we have a proportional electoral system.

Instead of respecting the pervasive and positive power of radical, dissenting politics in Britain, Millbank and No 10 treat it like an irritating fly, to be squashed whenever it gets near the food of the power. (And Paddy Ashdown and Richard Hain are taking lessons from them in order to deliver a fly-free LibDem party into coalition.) This is disturbing for the prospects of democratic reform of the British state as well as for the political life of the Labour

No 10 treats dissent like an irritating fly that needs to be squashed

Party. Underlying this attitude is a mistrust of the people: whether party members or ordinary citizens. Already, within the party, this is evident in the baroque efforts the apparatus is exerting to dilute One Member One Vote. The general public must see it in the manifesto to weaken and now delay the Freedom of Information Bill.

New Labour's treatment of those with whom it disagrees in its own party is a serious cause for concern to anyone, party member or not, who wants to see the nations and regions of the UK become part of a democracy. If Labour cannot trust its own members and allow debate and coalition to flourish, it is not going to trust the rest of us with a democratic electoral system, democratic regional and local government, freedom of information, and all the other democratic reforms which will diminish the power of Westminster in favour of the people.

This article will appear in Friday's Tribune. Hilary Wainwright is editor of Red Pepper

In opposition Tony Blair said he strongly favoured a Freedom of Information Act. So why does he appear to be reluctant to introduce it now that he can?

Secrets and lies

Maurice Frankel

FREEDOM of information is in trouble. The reform has provisionally been dropped from next year's legislative programme. Responsibility has been transferred to the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, reportedly the leading critic of David Clark's white paper on the subject. The news suggests that the promised FOI Bill will not just be delayed, but may be substantially watered down. FOI cannot easily be abandoned. It was in the manifesto and has been a Labour commitment for 25 years. But delay is likely to be damaging. As ministers become more used to office they inevitably become more cautious about creating rights to information that might embarrass them or help their critics. The first signs of retreat

have already been seen. The privatised utilities were to be covered by the FOI Act, but most of their functions will now be excluded. Ministers have also decided to introduce a new appeals tribunal, making it easier for government and business to challenge unfavourable decisions of the Information Commissioner, who will enforce the proposed act. The white paper had rejected this approach, believing it would encourage delaying tactics by those opposing disclosure.

Sweeping restrictions insisted on by the Home Office meant that the security services, and the law enforcement functions of the police, immigration service and other government departments, were to be excluded from the act altogether, even under the white paper proposals. Now some of its bolder elements are likely to come under pressure. Mr

Straw is on record as opposing the proposal that departments could resist disclosure only where it causes "substantial harm", a much stricter test than the plain "harm" of the current operation. Removing this test would blunt the bill's cutting edge at a stroke. How far such

Labour could have its own version of the Thatcher secrecy fiascos

changes will go will only become apparent when the Government's draft FOI Bill, which is to be published for consultation, appears.

By backpedalling on the reform, the Government is inviting a cynical reaction

that will harm its public standing. Tony Blair has described FOI as an antidote to public "disaffection from politics". The reluctance to implement it can only fuel that disaffection. A bold FOI Act would answer those who believe Labour is run by its spin doctors: delaying it strengthens that allegation. Labour has spent 18 years telling us they are different from the Tories, that sleaze, unaccountable government and self-serving secrecy will be things of the past. Now that they are in a position to deliver, their lack of enthusiasm is unmistakable.

Unhappiness on the Labour backbenches is already evident. An early-day motion calling for FOI to be introduced in the next session attracted the support of 184 MPs before the recess, including the chairman of no fewer than 12 select committees. The Public Administration Committee has

called on the Government to go further than its white paper: it is likely to react strongly if the moves are in the opposite direction.

The Shaylor case highlights the potential risks. The Government is proposing to charge David Shaylor under a section of the Official Secrets Act that Labour criticised in opposition. The act provides no public interest defence, but Shaylor is clearly arguing a public interest case. If he comes to trial, the judge will presumably have to instruct the jury to ignore such arguments, and may not even allow them to be put. The prospect of the former M15 man broadcasting his accusations from the dock of the Old Bailey must terrify ministers, but jailing him without allowing him to speak in his own defence would be worse. Labour would have its own version of the Thatcher secrecy fiascos — Spycatcher



and the Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdall trials. If it is simultaneously seen to be pulling the wings off its own freedom of information proposals, it will face a public relations nightmare.

All of this will also reflect on the Prime Minister, who has described FOI as an expression of his own political beliefs. He told the Campaign for Freedom of Information's annual awards in 1996 that FOI "is not some isolated constitutional reform" but "a change that is absolutely fundamental to how we see politics developing in this country over the next few years." It was, Mr Blair added, "getting rid of the old relationship in politics today". Why then is it not at the heart of the coming legislative programme?

Maurice Frankel is director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information

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Unity in tragedy

Both sides want results

IRISH UNITY, tragic and unwanted, was accomplished yesterday. In the meeting between Ronnie Flanagan of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Pat Byrne, commissioner of police in the Republic, the island was welded together. Questions of sovereignty became irrelevant. Even those in the north congenitally opposed to dealings with Dublin are silent. Nationalist terrorists (if they were responsible for Saturday's killing and maiming) have produced high-level cooperation, which must endure. And better liaison between the two police forces must be the only perverse consequence of Omagh. Who, even in the euphoria of May, would have predicted so ready an acceptance as the past days have seen of Republic politicians — especially a president elected on a nationalist ticket — grieving freely on Ulster's streets. Here, in the darkness of the deaths, are shards of political possibility. Deputy first minister Seamus Mallon emerges as exactly that — an authentic and eloquent voice for the whole community, Protestant and Catholic, orange and green.

Yet it was inevitable, yesterday, that attention should turn from grief and anger to detection and prevention. In police terms the border must cease to exist. As well as meetings between commissioner and chief constable, permanent and detailed joint working must follow at street, house and barge level. In committing the Irish state to the extinction of terror, Prime Minister Bertie Ahern seems to have realised that

what is at stake is not just public safety in Ulster but also the reputation of his own country as a modern, functional nation. No member of the EU can allow its territory to be exploited for the prosecution of terrorist crime on another's — the effective concordat between France and Spain over the Basque insurgency showed that some time ago. Mr Blair has, sure-footed as ever, enlisted Mr Ahern in assuring opinion on both sides of the Irish Sea that the security implications of Saturday are being seized. What are now wanted are results.

Inevitably, among responses being considered is internment, which in the Republic would not need a new law. But internment has to be all-Ireland and that means — for the British government — repeating a policy which failed. The fragile legitimacy of Northern Ireland's administration could not stand it. Besides it might even lessen security. Internment needs to be highly-selective, based on first-class intelligence of a kind that, despite all the finger-pointing at Dundalk, may not yet exist. Round-ups have notoriously perverse effects, stimulating support for violence. However, small the dissident republican group thought responsible for Saturday, it can breathe only because there remains collective support for terror in the shape of tolerant neighbours. The sea in which the fish swim needs to be drained and that is a job for politicians, moulding and leading opinion.

Among them are of course the leaders of Sinn Féin. Gerry Adams remembers his history and clearly fears his position may begin to resemble that of Michael Collins, fated to turn against the very exponents of terror who had so recently been his comrades-in-arms. Much is made, in Britain, about how much Adams and McGuinness know about arms dumps and personnel and the role they might play in assisting the

security forces in wrapping up the die-hards. Yet there is another role. It is that of community leadership, cajoling, persuading the nationalists of the North who have supported Sinn Féin into delivering their assent to the new structure. They can create circumstances in which support for extremism is further reduced. It's wishful to think dedicated terrorists could not find succour somewhere, north or south. But their scope for slaughter can be reduced.

More (t)roubles

Russia devalues by default

DEVALUATION, which the Russian Central Bank said on Friday would only cause more problems, has now been imposed in all but name. Boris Yeltsin, who asserted that there was no crisis and that he would defend the policy of a "stable rouble", has approved the lifting of the rouble's exchange limit by nearly 50 per cent — acknowledging that it is a crisis measure. All of this is very bad news for Russia — especially for ordinary Russians who know in their bones that it means higher prices, bank failures, and a miserable winter. It is also disturbing news for an international financial system already gloomily contemplating the economic fiasco of globalisation.

As the Wall Street Journal observed yesterday, there is some irony in the situation. The former enemy of world capitalism has been now converted to the cause only to threaten serious damage to the whole system. The other decision taken yesterday in Moscow — to halt payment on government treasury bills and impose a three months moratorium on payments on foreign debt — may not technically amount to defaulting, but it certainly sounds like it. The risk to

markets abroad arises less from the actual sums at stake than from the probable knock-on effect upon other "emerging markets" debt with which the Russian indebtedness is bundled up.

The new prime minister Sergei Kiriyenko has called it "a retreat to decisive action" — a revealing choice of words for measures which betray panic rather than resolution. Yesterday the IMF's managing director Michel Camdessus repeated his familiar call for the Duma to quickly improve tax-gathering measures — as his top negotiator arrived in Moscow for urgent talks. This only scratches at the surface of the Russian financial sickness. The country has a banking system where most banks are vehicles for speculation and personal enrichment. In terms of value there are probably already more dollars circulating than roubles. And while Russia seeks new international aid, a large proportion of previous injections of funds have been hijacked by the mafia elite into foreign accounts.

It could be necessary to grit one's teeth and admit that George Soros may have been right in his famous letter last week to the Financial Times. A currency board which automatically matches the national monetary supply to the state of reserves has some chance of stemming the flow. Yesterday's crypto-devaluation is likely to precipitate a real flood — with interest.

Brock in dock

Protection requires pilot culls

ONCE UPON a time they were regarded as a delicacy. Their hindquarters were cured like hams. But that was long before Wind in the Willows turned badgers into a loved and protected species. And rightly so. For the

most part the badger is an inoffensive animal, chiefly subsisting on roots and insects but ready to eat mice, eggs or young rabbits. Yet although badgers have been protected for 25 years, a succession of scientific reports have suggested they pose one serious threat: a source of TB infection in cattle. During the 1930s, 40 per cent of dairy cows (and 17 per cent of all cattle) were infected by tuberculosis. Untreated milk from these animals produced 50,000 TB cases a year in humans — leading to over 2,500 horrible deaths. The disease attacks the lungs first but spreads to other organs. With the introduction of pasteurisation, the bovine TB strain shrank to less than one per cent of all TB cases in the UK. Within the last decade, however, the proportion of infected cattle has begun to rise again: a sevenfold increase to 0.07 per cent.

Any responsible minister would respond. Two earlier reports — Zuckerman in 1960 and Dunnet in 1986 — which looked at TB in cattle concluded there were links with badgers. Last year the Krebs report suggested that interim culling should be stopped and more systematic pilot schemes tried. A separate independent scientific group, the Bourne committee, was set up to design the trials. Each pilot area will be divided into three: in one part the badgers will be left alone; in another they will be culled; and in the third they will only be culled when there are outbreaks of the disease. No snares will be used in the trials and there will be a closed 12-week season on trapping badgers while their cubs are being suckled. Badger protecting activists are still not satisfied. But that is being irrational. Pilot programmes — across an area of less than half the size of Cornwall — are the best way of establishing the right preventive programme. The badger is not being eliminated but controlled in high TB localities.

Letters to the Editor

Why embassy plan went down

WE had hoped to create a new embassy offices in Kiev and Sofia, but had to link the projects to make one large enough to be a viable PFI package (Embassy plans scrapped, August 17). However, when the Ukrainian government ended our lease of the site on which the new Kiev embassy was to be built, we decided to remain in our existing accommodation. With the removal of the Kiev project, a PFI solution was not viable. There was never any objection to the scheme from the ambassador in Sofia, nor was there any "bungling" by Foreign Office staff.

Joyce Quin, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

WHAT a pretty front-page picture of a Titan IV rocket exploding after take-off (August 13). Where was the copy to remind readers that it was a Titan IV which lifted 73lbs of plutonium on the Cassini space probe last October? Anna Cheetham, Leicester.

IF Clinton is found guilty of wrongdoing in the Lewinsky case and is impeached and jailed, will it be the first time he has gone down? Stephen Brooks, London.

HAS everybody forgotten why the rail companies were de-privatised in the first place (Letters, August 17)? Bill Glynn, London.

ON August 14 you carried a photograph of the Chancellor of near life-like size totaling almost 140 centimetres. We all know what Mr Brown looks like. Think of all the readers' letters that could have been printed instead. Barry Parker, Huyton, Merseyside.

No real soldiers these

THE Real IRA claim to be soldiers ('Real IRA' renegades blamed, August 17). They regard the car bomb in Omagh as an act of combat in a war that they refuse to allow to end. Why is anyone talking about "bringing them to justice" like criminals, who soon afterwards will be released from prison amid demands for their rights as "prisoners of war"? Unlike soldiers, they are in another town when their bombs go off. But we are told that politicians, security forces and paramilitaries who claim to have chosen peace, all know who they are. Let them be soldiers. Let them have their war. Give more forceful, discriminate and that violence a chance. David Davies, Salford.

OUR gut reaction is "we must do something". High on the knee-jerk wish list is internment. My response is,

for God's sake, don't. The perpetrators of this outrage will want us to do that. Their aim is to scupper the peace process, what better way to recruit more supporters than to create more martyrs. Some families will undoubtedly have an innocent member wrongly interned and there will be a rich new soil of resistance ready for the Real IRA to harvest. Let us be wise enough to do nothing; to realise that the hoodlums have, by this atrocity, destroyed their hopes of working the peace process. Stanley Walnuts, Mickleton, Co Durham.

COULD the media agree to stop using "The Real IRA" to describe the splinter group that rejected the Good Friday agreement? Every repetition of the phrase appears to be underwriting this faction's credibility. If the National Front renamed itself "The Real Conservative Party" I doubt if

that usage would be so meekly adhered to. Elaine Morgan, Mountain Ash, Mid-Glam.

AS A South African involved in my country's struggle for liberation, my heart goes out to the families in Omagh. To people in Ireland, all I can say is: hold high your heads and continue the fight for a just peace, which the killers are trying to wreck. Graeme Bloch, London.

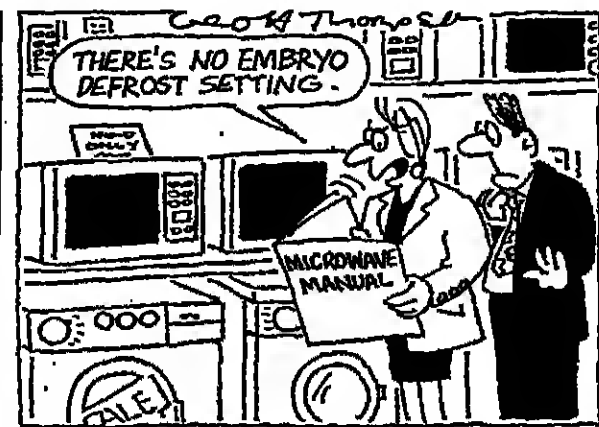
CONSIDERING the fact and grace with which you reported the terrible events at the weekend, I must highlight my disgust at the advert for Harrold's school clothing on the back of the front page. We learn from your report that among those killed and injured were parents and children shopping for their new school uniforms. Richard Wellens, St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

the two tickets to Washington? This is not an issue of left or right, as has been claimed, but a clear matter of democracy. Marxist Goodman, London.

WE have just voted (for the sensible size) in the NEC poll. We chose to do so by telephone. It was an interesting and completely satisfying process.

Instead of fumbling with a slip of paper and a pencil stub on a string, why can't we vote by phone at the next general election? By all means let others, come rain or shine, journey to some distant, inconvenient polling station, and let some cast their ballot by post. But may we use the phone! May and Jim Brunton, Rimburch.

THE town's losses were said to include 53 houses, seven barns full of corn and goods worth £50,000, besides a large amount of small arms and four pieces of cannon. Its records were rifled, and in a crowning indignity, the Royalists made off with its charter. As a local poet (well, versifier) was later to put it: Yet they with much ado entered the town.



I spy corruption and waste

I HAVE just read the excellent article by Richard Tomlinson, late of MIB (Spies, lies and that), in the New York Times, August 15. One must remember that the declared budgets of MIB and MIB are peanuts compared to total military and intelligence expenditure. Indeed, the declared staff counts of MIB and MIB are modest figures compared to the importance of their respective roles. Of much greater concern to this country is that the complacency and waste so aptly

described by Tomlinson is epidemic throughout the military and intelligence establishments. I have worked for GCHQ, Cheltenham and covert forces Northern Ireland. In common with Tomlinson, I discovered petty corruption, gross incompetence and obscene waste of public funds. Yet the perpetrators of these travesties remain protected by the establishment and the Official Secrets Act. Mike Arnold, Worcester.

CAT flies kite for Isas

THE fears expressed over the Kitemarks for the new Individual Savings Account (the "Kitemark" criticised, August 6) will prove to be more imagined than real. The Isa's proposed benchmarks — the CAT standards — will help consumers to judge if they are getting a fair deal on charges, access and terms. They are not intended to guarantee performance. People may not fully understand this at present, but there is a big difference between "don't understand" and "can't understand". In the run up to April 1999, the key role for gov-

ernment, regulators and the providers will be to promote a thorough understanding of the risk inherent in all equity Isas — CAT-marked or not. Widely available CAT-marked Isas, promoted by setting charges at an appropriate level for both customers and providers, will offer a great opportunity to help ordinary savers make informed savings choices with the confidence that they will not be stung by the high charges and hidden catches. Duncan MacFechie, Chief executive, Directline, Glasgow.

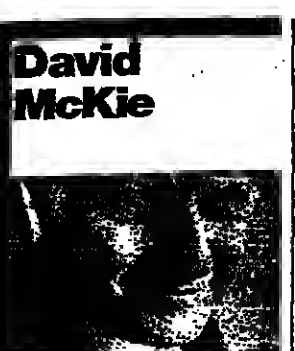
Sudan government has no veto on Operation Lifeline

IT IS simply untrue that "most humanitarian aid is channelled through arrangements which allow (the Sudan government) ultimate veto power" (Sudanese horrors, August 12). Operation Lifeline Sudan brings together the government, the rebel movement and the United Nations, together with over 30 NGOs. The Sudan government's record in Operation Lifeline Sudan since it began in 1989 is a clear one, and has been consistently commended by UN resolutions. The government has agreed to the growth in the number of delivery sites in the south — from 20 in 1993 to more than 180 during the recent crisis.

The majority of these sites are within rebel-held areas, and the government is fully aware that the rebels divert up to 65 per cent of such food aid, which therefore never reaches the civilians for whom it was intended. It is a matter of record that the government has unilaterally declared a permanent ceasefire throughout the south to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief assistance and to create an environment conducive to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Regrettably, the SPLA rebel movement has not agreed to a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. Moreover, the 1997 Khartoum Peace Agreement provides for an internationally supervised referendum through which the people of southern Sudan will be able to choose for the first time ever, whether they wish to continue within a united Sudan or opt for secession. Omer Y Hassan, Ambassador of Sudan, London.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a daytime telephone number. We may edit letters.

Named and shamed



A MODEST but significant victory is likely to be recorded this week in the Wiltshire town of Marlborough, where a company which named a new housing development after the 17th-century Royalist leader George, Lord Digby, will settle for something else. It must have seemed like a good idea at the time. The land, the site of an old children's hospital near the com-

mon, is close to the point where Digby marshalled his troops in a Civil War battle in 1642. How appropriate, the developers, English Courtyard, must have thought, to commemorate a slice of Marlborough's history. Now they know better. To call Digby "a shabby rogue", as one protester has done, is a little unfair. He seems to have been a man of some talent, who at 12 appeared at the bar of the Commons to plead for the release of his father, the first Earl of Bristol, who'd been thrown in the Tower.

He wrote poetry, had plays performed on the London stage. He was also, however, an indisputable rogue — a kind of serial double-crosser who, while serving on a committee to impeach the Earl of Strafford, made a speech attacking the process which his colleagues considered so treacherous that they had the text burned by the public

hangman. While a Royalist, he plotted against Prince Rupert. At one stage when exile seemed safest, he joined the French army, becoming a general, but was booted out for plotting against Cardinal Mazarin — not, as readers of Dumas will know, a wise thing to do. A few months before his first appearance at Marlborough he had been impeached for high treason, but the process against him was never completed.

Few people in Marlborough may have known much of this before the past fortnight, but local historians did. Marlborough was a Parliamentary town — "the most notoriously disaffected of all the county", according to the Royalist Clarendon. When Digby first appeared in 1642 with forces which greatly outnumbered his own, the townspeople greeted him with contempt. Their representative told him, that as to delivering up the good town of Marlborough to such a traitor or admitting any of his rabble within their lines, they would sooner die. For the moment Digby left them alone, but 10 days later he returned with reinforcements, swiftly overwhelmed the badly outnumbered defenders, and ravaged the town. The soldiers, Clarendon wrote, did "less execution than could reasonably be expected; but what they spared in blood they took in pillage, acquiring little who were friends or foes."

Having first burnt some of their houses down, That trusty sum they plundered in a rage Cause they opposed them; that (tis thought) an age Of years can hardly ever it repair To make it half so flourishing and fair.

The leaders of the town's resistance, among them their MP John Franklyn, were rounded up and marched in chains to Oxford. There they were thrown into jail, where they lived in wretched conditions. Franklyn died there. Yet now English Courtyard, it appeared, was set to honour the main author of these outrages. Protests, scholarly in analysis but apologetic in language, lit up the correspondence page of the Marlborough Gazette and Herald. "Digby," said one "was nothing short of a war criminal... It would be just as inappropriate to rename Canary Wharf Goring Heights."

Initially English Courtyard's chairman, Noel Shuttleworth, responded with some disdain. The decision would not be reversed. "One can dig out dirt about anyone," he told the Gazette. "People weren't saints at the time of the Civil War and there is every reason why it should be called Digby Court." But now he has changed his tune. "It is naturally our wish to cause offence to the people of Marlborough," he said. He hoped to discuss the issue with the council chairman to find something more conciliatory.

Sadly, though, the admirable suggestion by some of his critics that he ought to name the development after John Franklyn is likely to join Digby Court on the scrapheap of history. The chairman of English Courtyard agrees that in due course some development in Marlborough ought to commemorate Franklyn. But he isn't offering this one.

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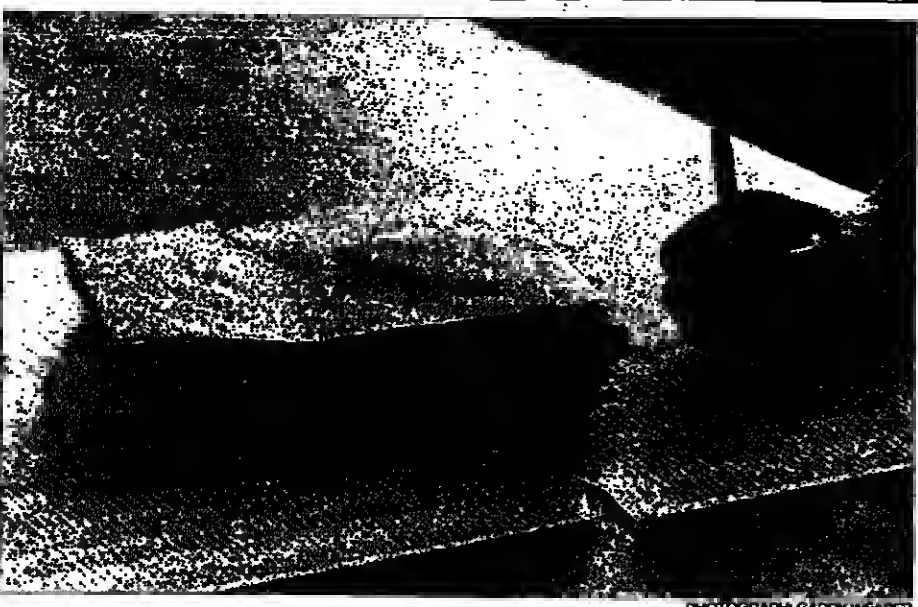
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Analysis Exam results



Anatomy of terror



PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY WEAVER

Time is the great A leveller

This week's GCSE and A level results will show further improvement in pass rates. But does this mean standards are improving? There's talk of 'grade inflation' and **David Walker** wonders just what public exams at 16 and 18 plus actually measure.

THE waiting is almost over. GCSE A level results are issued the day after tomorrow and GCSE a week later. It's not just young people who have been on tenterhooks these August weeks. The results support a great edifice of school and education authority league tables and university admissions schemes, on which depends the flow of funds into departments; they underpin grants regimes and inspectorial templates. Up, down or steady, results are the stuff of national political sparring.

But what does a B in history at A level or an A in maths in GCSE mean? It doesn't guarantee students know this or that, the main points of the Treaty of Versailles, say, or how to solve $x^2+4x=5(1)$. More passes co-exist with tales of illiteracy and ignorance. It isn't just the educational activists and right wingers who fear that year-on-year improvement in pass rates for both GCSE and A level aren't all they seem. Results do reliably say that in any given year student X has done better or worse than student Y and that's a valuable, filtering process. But results are notoriously suspect as a guide to what is happening across time. To ask whether a GCSE A grade is "as good as" an A or

B at O Level taken in 1978 or 1983 is to broach one of education's great unmentionables, the incommensurability of public examinations. Extraordinary as it sounds, no examination scripts from the 1970s or earlier have been kept.²

The scale of the improvement is shown in the graphic. It is remarkable and consistent. A level results getting continuously better since the Eighties, GCSEs up, up and away in the Nineties. Why? It could be better teaching, better pupils, the way schools prepare students for exams (or the way they exclude students not likely to get a result). But it could be examiner leniency or more coursework as opposed to sit-down final exams.

Whether the results are a better-qualified society. Congenital pessimists, whom education attracts like lemons, do not see it that way. They contend with the fact that the baccalauréat and the Abitur, the French and German 18-plus examinations, also show improved pass rates — and those countries have not experienced John Patten, Chris Woodhead, Tim Brighouse or

Stephen Byers. Congenital optimists have to square exam passes with ready evidence of dumbing down.

The General Certificate of Education is a child of the 1950s, designed for grammar schools. For all Labour's reputation as the party of educational iconoclasm (a reputation David Blunkett et al are working hard to dispel) it was Keith Joseph and the Tories who in the Eighties decided to do away with the 16-plus element of GCE Ordinary Level. In 1988 in place of it and the secondary modern exam, the Certificate of Secondary Education, was born the General Certificate of Secondary Education. As amended by the Major government, the GCSE in most subjects is "tiered" to suit students of differing ability. In say, maths or German the syllabus diverges so those likely to get an A or B grade do extra work. The picture is complicated by the fact that although vast numbers of students approach these 16-plus and 18-plus examinations with the same kinds of expectations about their leading to jobs or further study, they are organised by separate examining boards, which may differ in approach. Labour has reinforced Tory efforts to rationalise the boards, bringing together for example the

City and Guilds of London Institute, the Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board in a new Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The main 16 plus and 18 plus exams are — it mustn't be forgotten — A level and AS level. Last year, over 200,000 gained at least one A level, but that's only one in three of England's 17-year-olds. Half of all 16-year-olds got five or more GCSE grades A-C, 88 per cent got at least one GCSE or its equivalent. In between are large numbers for whom the public exam system is still largely irrelevant. Last year, the public schools entered a disproportionately large number of candidates for A level, nearly as many as the vast larger state comprehensive sector. So A level remains an examination designed to exclude. "People tend to value the exams that most children don't pass," noted Eric Bolton, a predecessor of Chris Woodhead as chief inspector of

schools. "But a compulsory system of schooling must have the aim of giving the majority some qualification and some motivation. That's where we've always gone wrong in the past."

IN 1963 only 3 per cent of 16-year-olds took A level and one third of them failed. Now a substantial minority of the age cohort enters and nine out of 10 pass. Logically, if the exam were the same, that would imply 16-year-olds are much more able, either intellectually or in terms of their examination capability. But the exam is not the same as in the Fifties. Syllabuses changed. Then in 1983 the explicit marking policy that ensured a 30 per cent failure rate was ended. Options altered, perhaps in the direction of "easier". Entries for A level economics are down 55 per cent since 1990 while those for business studies (demanding less economics) are up 182 per cent. Maths A level has recently been redesigned.

Since the Eighties "modular" courses have grown. In them students complete a block of course work, are graded, then move on. (Optimists point out that modern A level students are better prepared thanks to their experience of course working at GCSE). The Tories got anxious about modular A levels, which one study showed allowed students to improve their grades, and Labour says it has halted their growth.

Attitude and qualifications brought by students to the exams have also been changing. In the early Nineties "recession consciousness" grew, motivating entrants to study harder and do better. Schools became more aware of the (financial) value of passes; they started to look for year-on-year improvement. Specialist teachers became expert at spotting the boards and syllabuses that suited students and teaching methods. Why, then, do parents and employers complain that improved exam results are not reflected

in better literacy and numeracy among school leavers? School exams are rarely like the driving test. As the late Professor Desmond Nuttall put it, "A brilliant hill start doesn't compensate for not being able to turn a corner."

In GCSE English, nobody denies that poor spelling should be penalised. But should a child who does everything else well — grammar, punctuation, essay-writing, oral expression, appreciation of literature — get a lower grade because he or she spells abysmally? The examination boards for GCSE thought not.

What is examined has unquestionably changed in, say, history. A few years ago two teachers from Lewes Priory School, East Sussex, lost their jobs after criticising the GCSE history syllabus for its emphasis on comprehension skills as opposed to knowledge; they also regretted the movement away from classic British political history (Gladstone and Disraeli) to themes with contemporary resonance such

as race relations and the media. But defenders of GCSE (whose ranks are thick in the private sector as well as state schools) value the move away from memorising fact; pass notes are less valuable in exams where candidates have to demonstrate their own thinking. Surprisingly few studies have been done. The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate did compare O level English papers in 1980 with 1994's GCSE; the earlier year's students were "more capable of writing accurately" — 1994's used shorter sentences, less elaborate vocabulary and spelled more erratically.³ Examiners are kinder now, though the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority takes great pains to ensure year by year consistency.⁴ There is a tendency to push borderline candidates up rather than down.

The phenomenon of grade inflation isn't confined to the schools. In the universities, a first from Imperial College London is not the same as one from Heriot Watt, despite the apparatus of external examiners and quality assessment procedures; besides, all universities have higher pass rates than they used to — the 2.2 degree, once a staple, is approaching extinction.

Grade inflation looks like continuing. Last year, for the first time, more than 60 per cent of 11-year-olds reached the Government's standard or better in both English and maths. If the improvement continues the targets will easily be met by 2002. That is bound to produce higher rates of attainment at GCSE than at A level, especially now that the Government has started to set statutory targets for 16 year olds. The extrapolations are easy to do: by the third decade of the next century all entrants will get a top grade GCSE...

SHOULD this "improvement" occasion concern? Alan Smithers, director of centre for education and employment research at Brunel University says exam passes are a coinage — as long as everyone agrees on their value at a given point it does not matter whether they lack intrinsic significance. The important thing about exams is whether they do the job of filtering that parents and employers and admissions tutors want done by the schools. Some universities think not. Warwick has recently started asking not just for an A in mathematics but a Sixth Term Exam Paper pass or other special papers.

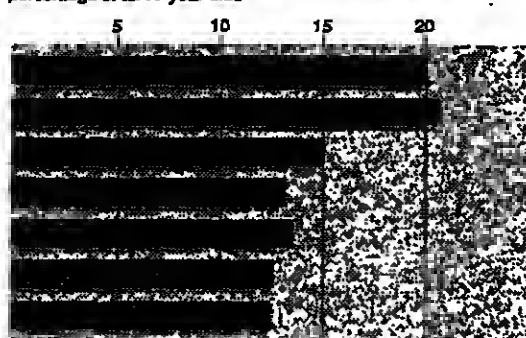
"Yes", says Smithers, "exams are not the fine sieve they used to be". But he warns against generalising between these subjects (chemistry and maths for example) where there are strong external reference points ensuring reasonable continuity of knowledge and skills over time and those such as history and English where the nature of the subject does change. "They aren't a good thermometer, but does that matter as long as there is public confidence in them?"

Sources: (1) $x^2+4x=5(1)$; (2) <http://www.gcse.com>; (3) Standards in Public Examinations 1975-1985, School Curriculum and A Levels Assessment Authority, 1996; (4) Times Educational Supplement, April 12, 1996; (5) GCSE and A/AS Code of Practice, March 1996, CCA Media Relations Office. Graphics: Michael Agar. David Walker edits Analysis.

The Nineties: a booming decade for passes

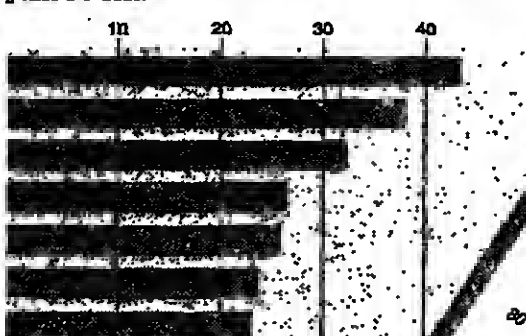
No longer an elite exam

School leavers gaining two or more GCE A level passes as a percentage of all 17 year-olds



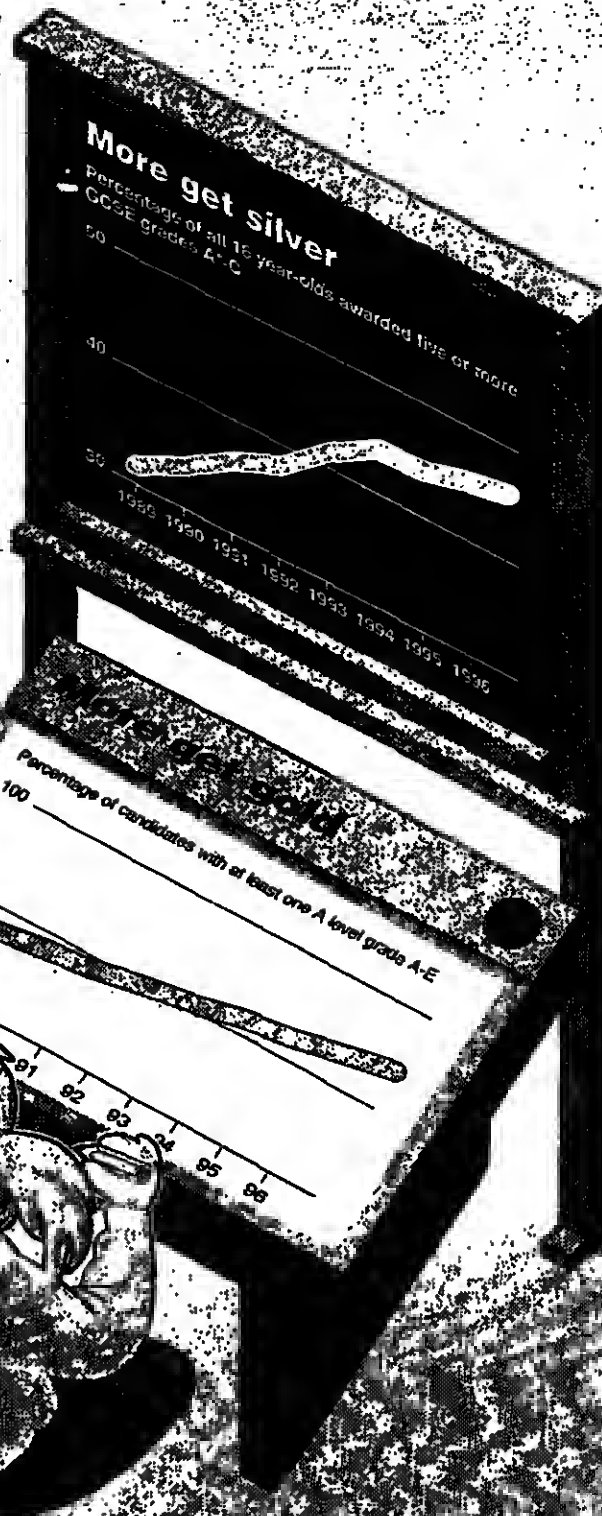
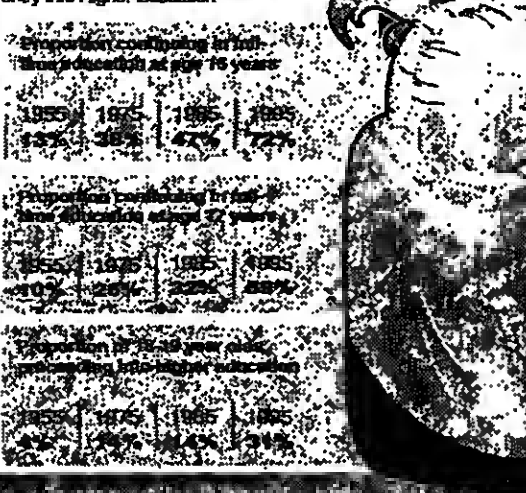
Quantities of qualifications

Percentage of 18 year-olds awarded five or more GCSE/A/CSE grades C or better



Staying on and on

Participation in post-16 education and entry into Higher Education



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Somerfield back in market

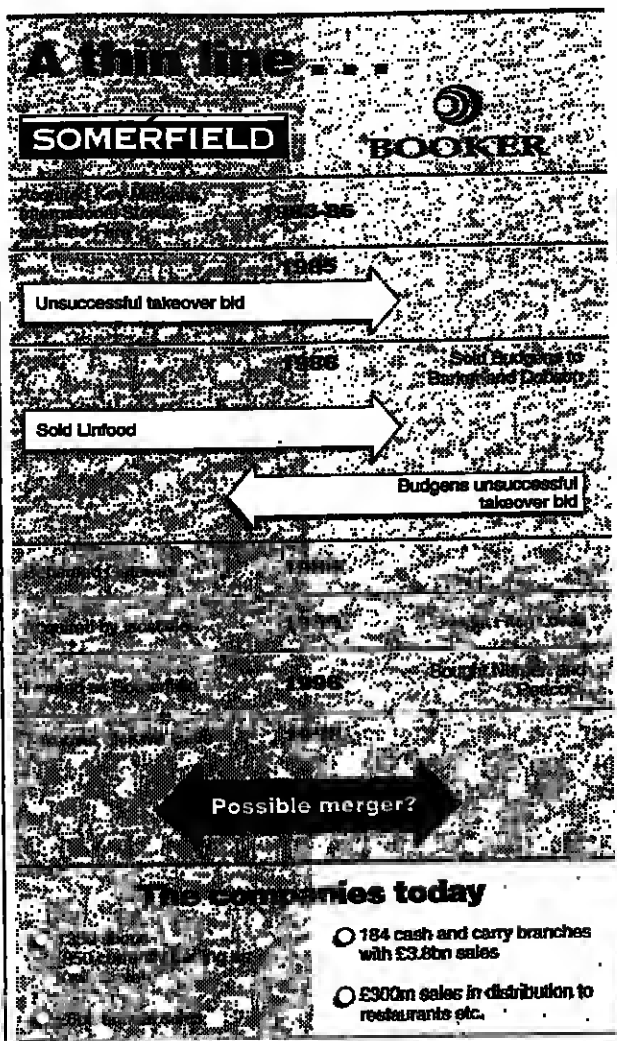
Food firms' courtship is of almost Victorian duration

THE history of these two groups has been intertwined for almost 15 years, while each has had interests in both sides of the retail/wholesale divide.

Linfood Holdings, a wholesaler, was the forerunner of Somerfield. It became Dee Corporation in 1983, when the emphasis was switching to supermarkets, mainly under the Gateway banner. Dee then made a bid for Booker, which was eventually defeated in 1985.

Soon afterwards Booker acquired the Linfood operation from Dee, and sold the Budgens supermarket chain, which had been Dee's main target. The buyer, Barker & Dobson, promptly attempted to take over Dee, narrowly failing.

Booker has concentrated on building up cash and carry, through the purchase of Fitch Lovell and the second-placed player, Nurdin & Peacock. Dee, meanwhile, has gone through a disastrous buyout which eventually led to its re-emergence as a public company under the Somerfield name, and some of its larger stores.



Grocer's latest target is Booker

Roger Cowe

SOMERFIELD, the ambitious supermarket chain which acquired Kwik Save earlier this year, revealed yesterday that it is negotiating a £2.7 billion merger with Booker, the cash and carry operator.

The deal would create a powerful food empire ranging from cash and carry supply for small stores to conventional supermarkets. Its combined sales of £11 billion would put the new group in third place in the grocery trade, close to Sainsbury and Tesco.

A merger of the two groups would lead to administrative savings and possible benefits from combining two distribution systems. The enlarged buying power could produce better profit margins and create the opportunity for stronger own label products.

But the news was met with dismay in the City, where both companies' share prices were marked down. Somerfield shares fell 4 per cent, while Booker's dropped by more than 3 per cent.

One analyst said: "I am very concerned that this is coming only four months

after the Kwik Save acquisition, which has yet to be bedded down and proved. I would question whether Somerfield has the middle management capability to integrate these two different businesses."

Clive Vaughan of Verdict Research echoed these concerns. "I am not convinced Somerfield could take on such a very different sector, and certainly not for the next six months," he said.

Mr Vaughan cast doubt on the potential for joint branding. "I doubt whether Booker customers want the Somerfield brand. Shoppers in these smaller shops don't want a brand they have never heard of," he said.

He also pointed to a potential conflict between Booker's services to small neighbourhood stores, through its cash and carry outlets, and Somerfield's high street network, which has been promoted as a neighbourhood store chain.

"The reason cash and carry is having problems is because supermarket chains like Sainsbury are competing rather heavily on the independent shops that Booker serves," Mr Vaughan said.

Last week Sainsbury announced a special club for village stores, threatening their business with cash and carry

outlets. It would enable small shops to sell Sainsbury brand products, but would represent a further encroachment on the traditional grocer by the big supermarkets.

The supermarket industry is already being investigated by the Office of Fair Trading, after complaints by food manufacturers about the large chains' excessive power.

The OFT would also be likely to examine a Somerfield/Booker merger. But such a tie-up would be more acceptable than the takeover of Booker by the German company Metro, which is also interested in the UK wholesaler. Metro already has about 10 per cent of the UK cash and carry market after its acquisition of Makro. Combining this with Booker's estimated 40 per cent share would be likely to be blocked on monopoly grounds.

Both Somerfield and Booker warned yesterday that negotiations are still at a preliminary stage and could break down. If the merger is to go ahead a decision is likely in the next three weeks.

Jonathan Taylor, the Booker chairman, said: "We are talking to Somerfield seriously but we have not discussed terms and we have other options. This is an important dialogue but it is not exclusive."

Other companies thought to be interested in Booker's cash and carry business include the US discount giant, Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart has recently made its first entry into European retailing and is thought to be interested in the UK.

Notebook

Kremlin's cure just a placebo



Mark Milner

THE RUSSIANS have clearly borrowed the European Union's script for avoiding the 'd' word. As in 1993, when the fluctuating bands of the exchange rate mechanism were widened to 15 per cent either side of a central rate, so Moscow has decided it has not devalued the rouble — simply widened the band it can trade in.

The markets were not impressed by such a transparent device. The rouble has plummeted, and Russia's voters will be equally dismissive of the semantic cover behind which the Kremlin and the Russian central bank are trying to hide their blunders.

Now that the rouble has fallen off the wall, however, the question is whether the king's men — Boris Yeltsin and his advisers, the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Seven industrialised countries — will be able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

The immediate prospects do not look promising. Devaluation, suspending debt repayments, restricting capital flows are, at best, palliatives. They will not suddenly make corporate Russia into a virtuous collective demanding to pay its taxes. Russian companies will not be able to launch an export drive to reverse the balance of payments on the back of a newly competitive exchange rate. Instead, they will find trade finance even trickier.

Nor will devaluation strengthen the failing banking system. Russia's banks will find it harder and more expensive to raise the funds needed to meet foreign currency obligations. They will find queues outside their branches as anxious citizens rush to withdraw their savings before the roof caves in.

Western economists will, no doubt, applaud such "restructuring". Russia, they will say, needs a system where banks are more interested in assessing risk than in lending to their cronies.

that have tried to embrace the free market but have been buffeted by economic misfortune and the attention of criminal elements intent on getting their hands in the till.

But how you will, Russia is in for a humpy political and economic ride.

Nor is it standing in isolation. Germany's banks, the highest lenders to Russia, may have made heavy provision against their exposure — in the case of Commerzbank provisions are running at 60 per cent — but the fall-out from the Asian crisis will still be felt abroad. Coupled with the Asian collapse, it is likely to end the global economic outlook.

The combination of Russian roulette and the Asian contagion presents the greatest danger.

It is little more than 12 months since the devaluation of the Thai baht sparked the meltdown in South-East Asia that later spread to other parts of the region, most notably to Japan and South Korea. Though a new crisis has begun, the old one is far from over; the speculators have been pecking away at the peg between the Hong Kong and US dollars. European companies are beginning to complain with mounting stridency, about dumping from Asia on the EU doorstep.

Japan will act to prop up drooping yen

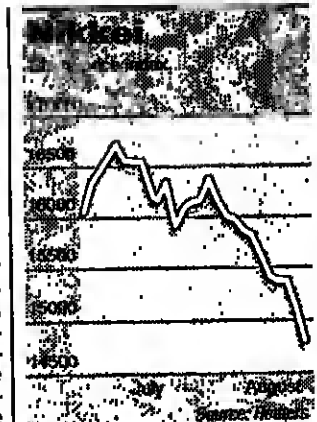
Laurie Laird, Jonathan Watts in Tokyo and Mark Tran in New York

JAPAN is poised to take action to halt the slide of the yen as the international financial markets suffer the turmoil caused by the devaluation of the Russian currency yesterday.

Japanese finance ministry official Eisuke Sakakibara, known as "Mr Yen" for his ability to influence the foreign exchange markets — stressed that Japan is on the verge of taking action to support the seemingly inexorable slide of the yen.

The report was enough to push the dollar down to 145.50 yen late in the London day from about 146.30 early on. But many dealers say Mr Sakakibara's influence has waned since his implication in an influence-peddling investigation several months ago; he has been strangely silent since the dollar began its steady rise from about 130 yen in April.

Last night dealers were anxiously awaiting the start



of Tokyo trading; markets there had closed before the Russian announcement early on Monday morning. Despite this the benchmark Nikkei 225 index managed to lose 2.2 per cent of its value yesterday for the first time since June. It has fallen on 10 of the 11 trading days since Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi took office.

Worst hit were shares in blue chip manufacturing

firms, which fell over fears that the slowing US economy may be less able to absorb Japanese imports.

"The market is extremely vulnerable to external pressure," said Pelham Smithers of ING Barings Japan. "What is happening in the export markets of America and Asia is crucial. A recovery is out of Japan's control."

The Asian bourses trading at the time of the Russian announcement fell moderately, at least by recent Asian standards. Dealers will be eyeing today's opening of the Hong Kong market — a possible devaluation candidate — as the exchange was closed for a holiday yesterday.

Reaction to the Russian bombshell was subdued in the west yesterday with many dealers saying they had already sold shares ahead of the announcement. Even Russian shares were up at one point during the day, before the benchmark index closed down by 5 per cent in extremely illiquid trading. The bellwether US market opened moderately lower before stretching to an 85-point gain.



Downhill ride... a cyclist passes the plummeting Tokyo Stock Exchange PHOTO: TORU YAMAMURA

JAL in blooming scandal

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

JAPAN Airlines flew into the nation's latest corporate extortion storm yesterday, as police revealed that the company is suspected of making payoffs in the guise of rental fees for plants.

JAL made the payments to a company run by racketeers between 1990 and 1998, apparently in payment for the lease of artificial potted plants, according to JAL spokesman Isao Kaneko. "We thought it was a legitimate business deal as we were getting plants for the money," he

said. Many Japanese companies make payments to racketeers in exchange for promises not to disrupt shareholder meetings with embarrassing questions. Racketeers buy shares in companies in order to permit them to attend such meetings.

In the past two years similar scandals have encompassed such leading Japanese firms as Nomura Securities, Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank and Mitsubishi Motors.

Mr Kaneko said that he and the company's vice-president would have their salaries halved for the next three months to show that they are prepared to take

responsibility for the scandal.

According to news reports, several JAL executives have admitted involvement in the payoffs, which are illegal under the Commercial Code.

"We didn't think it was strange to lease plants," said Shigeru Kameba, head of JAL's press office. "We lease other things, such as airplanes."

The airline paid the racketeers a total of about 23 million yen (\$290,000).

Tokyo metropolitan police arrested two corporate racketeers in connection with extortion from Japan Airlines. Kyodo News reported.

Virgin Victory in trouble Anger as P&O sacks 320

Roger Cowe

VICTORY Corporation, the cosmetic and clothing subsidiary of Virgin Group, warned yesterday of rising losses and announced the departure of non-executive directors including Virgin's corporate development director, Brad Rosser.

Victory, one of two public companies in Richard Branson's business empire, was floated on the Alternative Investment Market two years ago. Its shares, originally 50p, lost more than half their remaining value yesterday to close at 92p.

Mr Rosser, who has been with Virgin for three years,

has left the group. Virgin said he had resigned to pursue other interests, thought to be in his native Australia.

Rory and Tim McCarthy, whose McCarthy Corporation is a junior partner in the company, have also resigned from the board. A Virgin spokesman said the relationship between McCarthy and Virgin would not be affected.

Mr McCarthy was originally Victory's chairman. He stepped down in April when Virgin brought in Ian Plummer, a brand specialist whose background includes spells at Grand Met and PepsiCo.

Victory made a loss of nearly £10 million last year when it launched the Virgin Vie cosmetics chain and said

yesterday that losses for the current year would be significantly higher than had been expected.

Victory said yesterday that the Vie shops would not make a profit for at least two years. The brand is now being re-aligned to bring it closer to the casual and informal Virgin image.

The delayed launch of Victory's range of casual clothing will come on Thursday at Selfridges. The Virgin branded clothing will appear in up to 200 stores over the next few weeks. It has been expanded from the original target of Virgin jeans to include a wider range of casual clothing such as sweatshirts and jumpers.

Seamus Milne Labour Editor

THE internationalisation of jobs in Britain's shipping industry passed an historic turning point yesterday when P&O Nedlloyd announced that it is sacking 320 ratings in the last 20 deep-sea container ships which employ mainly British crews. They will be replaced by low-paid Filipino workers.

The Rail Maritime and Transport union reacted with fury to the decision. The union said it would be recommending its members to ballot for industrial action.

A spokesman for P&O Nedlloyd — formed last year by

P&O and the Dutch firm Royal Nedlloyd — said it would be replacing the British ratings "reluctantly" because of the need to cut costs in the "fiercely competitive" shipping business.

Although there are a handful of British ratings working in other deep-sea container ships, the P&O Nedlloyd ships are the last in the deep-sea fleet employing mostly British sailors. Of the 320 workers, all are British except for 20 New Zealanders.

Now, only the ferries, oil sector and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, which services the armed forces, will still employ mainly British crews. The British marina fleet has lost thousands of jobs in

recent years as companies have adopted "flags of convenience" and brought in cheaper Third World crews.

P&O Nedlloyd can expect to save around half the £18,000 it pays British sailors for a 56-hour week, the RMT said yesterday. Tony Santamara, the union's national shipping officer, said P&O had pulled the plug just as talks with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, on support for the merchant fleet seemed to be bearing fruit.

He added: "This is an unforgivable decision which has grave repercussions not only for more than 320 workers and their families, but also for the future of the UK merchant fleet."

Rupert Jones

LOYDS Bank customers who feel that their complaints are not being taken seriously can now take their gripes direct to the bank's directors.

Claiming that Lloyds is a prime offender at fobbing people off, a banking advice organisation has published the home addresses of chairman Sir Brian Pittman and other directors on the Internet, enabling customers to take their gripes to the top.

It is the Independent Banking Advisory Service, which receives more than 20,000 inquiries and complaints a year, over a third relating to Lloyds TSB.

The organisation said it is

striking a blow for those who may feel powerless in the face of head office implacability while bank directors remain frustratingly out of reach and anonymous.

"Our actions are intended to 'encourage' the bank to reconsider the dismissive way in which they presently address complaints," said Ibas chief executive Eddy Weatherill.

The web site — at www.ibas.co.uk — lists the full home addresses of 17 Lloyds TSB board members, including Sir Brian and chief executive Peter Ellwood, of Daventry, Northants.

Ibas, set up five years ago as an independent, non-profit-making organisation offering help and assistance to bank customers with complaints.

Lloyds gripes can go to top

| TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Australia 2.65 | Germany 2.8339 | Malaysia 5.83 | Singapore 2.78 |
| Austria 15.88 | Greece 478.77 | Malta 0.82 | South Africa 9.98 |
| Belgium 26.48 | Hong Kong 12.14 | Netherlands 3.12 | Spain 238.08 |
| Canada 2.37 | India 70.06 | New Zealand 2.13 | Sweden 12.94 |
| Cyprus 0.83 | Ireland 1.185 | Norway 12.11 | Switzerland 2.36 |
| Denmark 10.88 | Israel 5.9988 | Portugal 288.29 | Turkey 428.830 |
| Finland 2.810 | Italy 2.810 | Saudi Arabia 5.84 | USA 1.5657 |
| France 6.47 | | | |

Supplied by Reuters (excluding rupee, shekel and msnar)

Racing Faithful Son to bring House down

Graham Rock

GODOLPHIN'S Faithful Son narrowly defeated Chester House in a hat-trick finish to the Prince of Wales's Stakes at Royal Ascot and he can beat Henry Cecil's colt once again in the Juddmonte International Stakes, highlight of the opening day of the Ebor meeting.

Faithful Son (3.10) improved on that Ascot performance when beaten half a length by stable companion Daylami in the Eclipse next time and he has pleased at home since. So, too, has Chester House, who beat moderate opposition in a slow time at Newbury on his only subsequent outing.

One So Wonderful would need to improve on her success at Chepstow, Limpid won a weakly-contested Grand Prix de Paris, and while Exclusive landed the Coronation Stakes, her stamina over an extended 10 furlongs has to be taken on trust.

Hillman finished third to Rahab at Goodwood and over this galloping course can take his revenge in the Stakia Casino Great Voltigeur Stakes.

Godolphin's Sea Wave is improving fast and The Glow-Worm, who ran sixth to High-Rise in the Derby, comes from Barry Hills's stable, which is in peak form.

Hills also saddles Prolux, who has been running well in top-class company, on his penultimate start finishing fifth behind Dream Well in the French Derby. In an open race, The Glow-Worm (3.45) might shine brightest.

The Carbine Club Eglinton Nursery is as competitive as any of the seven races, but Novell House (5.15) is an interesting contender.

Trained by Mick Easterby, one of the masters of preparing a horse for a specific target, Novell House is handicapped on three races over five furlongs, the latest when third behind Zargossea at Thirsk, whereas he is to play the seven of today's race.

Michael Roberts has been booked, and off his low weight Novell House can pay a compliment to the skill of his local trainer.



Ebor raiders... Paul Cole gets to grips with one of his big-race hopes, Cyrian, at his Whatcombe stables

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Cole ready to serve up York aces

Colin Fleetwood-Jones meets a trainer with an eye on the main prizes in Ebor week

YORK is no picnic for a trainer, but Paul Cole started Ebor week well — his hamper was adjudged the best at the local Picnic Ball.

It remains to be seen whether he can serve up some delights on the Knavesmire at Ebor. This morning, however, there is time for a spot of tennis before putting the final touches to his raid on Yorkshire.

Resplendent in white, he cuts a dashing figure on the grass court in front of the stable yard, even though cricket is where his heart is. He has stood next to you in a bar you wouldn't pick a fight with him — unless you were drinking something that cancelled out all reason.

He stands 6ft 3½in, weighs 16st and looks straight out of England's finest England

(remember that fast bowling blacksmith breasting the rise with the new ball, steam snorting from his nostrils off a run which seemed to start in the adjoining county).

Cole has fulfilled that role in the past, opening the assault for the Lambourn versus Newmarket needler, with former Harrow captain Will Haggas waiting for what he is about to receive. A rare smile flits across his normally stern features at recollections of re-arranging the fellow Derby winning trainer's furniture.

As on the pitch, ground conditions play an important part in racing and Cole's face darkens as he dwells on the vagaries of going forecasts. "I've spoken to someone or other up there at York, but these people always seem to lie through their teeth about

conditions. Newbury at the weekend was a disgrace," he said.

"They over-watered to start with and the ground was dead on Friday. They watered again and then the rain came. As a result, Saturday's going was tacky and dead. Here we are in the middle of the season and these twerps produce that ground."

Whatcombe, nestled in an Oxfordshire valley where skylarks signify that it is a good day to be alive, has produced a significant bunch for York's showpiece meeting.

The absence of Courtesier, a son of former stable star and Derby winner Generous, from today's Great Voltigeur Stakes is an early setback for Cole who was bullish about his horse's prospects.

But Generosity, another of the Generous boys, goes in the Melrose Handicap and cannot be discounted.

On Wednesday Badmires aims for the Motability Stakes. "You can dismiss his

last run as he was drawn one and raced a bit free. This rated stakes will suit him," Cole points out.

Lady In Waiting could run in the Yorkshire Oaks. Her staying-on fourth to Exclusive in Royal Ascot's Coronation Stakes would not rule her out over this longer trip.

Anno Domini sidesteps the Gimcrack in favour of the further shorter Roses Stakes later on the card, and Cole observes that he has been working extremely well lately.

The House Selling Stakes is notoriously a lot better than such races elsewhere, and Charles Spence, owned by art supremo Richard Green, who names his horses after artists, can step up from his third in a Lingfield accident after having been laid up with sore shins.

However, the Ebor is the interesting, Cole target, with Whatcombe fielding both top weight Yorkshire and Cyrian. The former is a trifle inept and was unlucky not to

win the Queen Alexandra Stakes at the Royal meeting. Binklers have been used and Cole stands by him to confound the gelding's critics.

"Cyrian is in absolutely tip-top form, but to get the best out of him he needs cut," the trainer adds.

For Thursday, Cole is keen on the chances of Present Laughter in the Convivial Maiden Stakes. "He is a very nice two-year-old, but he will undoubtedly meet others in what should be a rather hot race, while Sahara, who runs in the Galtes Stakes, has been moving really well on the gallops here."

One is conscious of being in the presence of greatness at Whatcombe. You are greeted by a statue of Stanger, Cole's 1990 St Leger winner, gazing out imperiously over the acres where he once stretched his legs, while in the centre of the stable yard a similar representation of Generous gives the present inmates something to look up to.

Rugby Union

Peace offer to Welsh over league

Paul Rees on a day of brinkmanship by Cardiff and Swansea

ANOTHER attempt to launch a British League next month was made yesterday as the Welsh Rugby Union mounted a late effort to keep Cardiff and Swansea on board.

The WRU had given the two clubs until yesterday lunch-time to sign loyalty agreements or face being thrown out of all official competitions. The two had refused to sign in protest at the WRU decision last week not to back a British League until next season.

A game of brinkmanship was played out yesterday morning. The two clubs' officials met at Cardiff's ground to discuss tactics and 15 minutes before the deadline they invited the WRU secretary Dennis Gethin and the vice-chairman Les Williams to join them.

The union refused and told the clubs to walk the 500 yards to the governing body's headquarters. The clubs then outlined their conditions for remaining within the union and not seeking to break away to play friendlies against the Allied Dunbar Premiership One clubs.

The WRU had earlier received an assurance from the Rugby Football Union that the English clubs would not be allowed to play Cardiff and Swansea and that sanctions would be taken against any who ignored the instruction.

Cardiff and Swansea told the WRU that a British League was possible in the

coming season because the two main obstacles cited by the union last week were removable. Cardiff would drop their High Court action against the WRU and the leading English clubs would call off their European Court challenge to the International Board's regulations.

The English clubs would also return to the European fold next month and so, argued Cardiff and Swansea, there could be no real objection to the immediate creation of the British League. Gethin and Williams listened to the arguments for an hour but left without making a decision.

A special meeting of the WRU's general committee was convened for the evening and contact was again made with the chairman of the RFU's management board, Brian Balster.

The WRU said initially that it would not issue a statement after last night's meeting — but it then changed its mind and said a brief statement would be issued, after consultation with the RFU.

The WRU's dilemma was that although last week it had rejected the British League on legal grounds, that stand was no longer valid after the case outlined by Cardiff and Swansea and the WRU's chairman Glanmor Griffiths and its most influential figure Vernon Pugh, the chairman of the IB, were both in Argentina. Pugh was blamed by the clubs for sabotaging last week's attempt to launch the British League but Griffiths was known to be more sympathetic to the idea.

Jones joins Bristol exodus to sign two-year deal with Cardiff

ROBERT JONES became the latest player to leave Bristol yesterday when he announced he is to sign a two-year deal with Cardiff.

Bristol's new director of rugby Bob Dwyer was expecting the former Wales and Lions scrum-half for their first training session at the Memorial Ground yesterday but the 35-year-old failed to turn up.

"I spoke to him over the weekend and he said that he would be at training. I gave him some reassurances that we really wanted him to be part of our future at Bristol," said Dwyer.

"It is a disappointment for us but there's always going to be some of those difficulties and we wish him good luck. It won't be the first disappointment of anyone's rugby career including mine."

Premiership Two Bristol are now left with just two scrum-halves, the Welshman Gareth Baber and Zimbabwean-born Dean Dewdney.

"My guess is that Cardiff will be playing in the new British League this coming season and that probably was the little bit that he needed to help him make his decision," Dwyer said.

York card with form for the Jackpot races

| GRAHAM ROCK | TOP FORM |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 2.05 Inker | Auction House |
| 2.10 Canyon Cove | Paradise Palace |
| 2.15 Fabled Star | Fabled Star |
| 2.30 The Glow-Worm | Sea Wave |
| 4.15 Kallie | Shangri |
| 4.45 Parysion View | Paradise Palace |
| 5.15 Michael Roberts | Michael Roberts |

Left-handed, U-shaped course of 2m with run-in of nearly 50. Straight 60. Ideal track for long-striding gallop.

Going: Good to firm. © Donor: Mrs. M. Roberts. © Top form noted.

Drum Low to middle ground. Figures in brackets after horse's name show days since last outing. Jumps.

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4.15 CHARLES HEDDERLEY MELBOURNE RATED IF CAP 370

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Brighton runners and riders

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4.45 EAGLE LANE HANDICAP

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Vialli upbeat after quiz on drugs

HE Chelsea player-manager Gianluigi Vialli yesterday testified before the Turin state prosecutor as part of an inquiry into the drug use in Italian football.

The investigation by Raffaele Goiaoriello was prompted by allegations by the Rome-based Sunday Express man. After being interviewed the former Juventus player Vialli told reporters: "I can't say to you, but it went well, very well."

Zeman has expressed concern about the long-term health implications of pharmaceuticals in the game and said in an Italian weekly L'Espresso he was asked if it was true he had been "surprised" by the "muscular explosion of certain Juventus players" replied: "My amazement starts with Gian-

lucs Vialli and got all the way to Alessandro Del Piero." Those remarks prompted promises by Vialli, Del Piero and Juventus to sue Zeman. Both players have emphatically denied malpractice, arguing they would not resort to intensive training methods.

Zeman had warned against pharmaceutical companies which offer "magic pills", tempting players with the promise of greatly enhanced performance. He has also publicly using products better suited to the sick or injured.

In layman's terms, he appears to be saying that, though there is no evidence that Italian players have chemically used illegal products, they are using products, cortisone-related drugs, anabolic steroids or even erythropoietin (EPO, the drug at the centre of the Tour de France scandal), which may be the much-misunderstood multi-million dollar cocktails so-called "restructors".

Although legal, these restoratives may prove dangerous for the players' long-term health, and in the short term it is at least questionable if they constitute fair sporting practice.

He said: "Players are under ever greater pressure and it gets harder and harder for them to resist the temptation of the magic little pill. I'm sure that many players in Serie A, for example, have difficulty giving up on certain substances."

His comments prompted expressions of solidarity on only from coaches such as Gigi Simoni and Gianni De Biasi, and Carlo Mazzoni (Bologna) and also from the deputy Prime Minister and the Sports Minister, Riccardo Agricola, the Juventus chief medical officer, has denied his players took any such substances. Agricola said they used legal restoratives.

TONY ADAMS, the 31-year-old Arsenal captain, says he is at the end of this season if his nagging ankle injury fails to clear up. The England defender has to take anti-inflammatory tablets before matches and is worried that the side-effects might cause permanent damage.

"If I find I have to take them before every game this season then I will have to give a lot of thought to carrying on next season," he said. "I would not like to play for at least another couple of seasons and finish at the top."

"The appetite is very much there but I want a life after football and there

have been worrying reports about long-term side-effects from constant use of these tablets."

Adams, who played in the Charity Shield without taking medication and believes that is a good sign, added: "I want to be able to play golf and go swimming. With the tablets the ankle injury is manageable, but really they are only masking the problem."

"I have played over 600 games with my legs and that's bound to have an effect. I took the tablets during the World Cup because I thought it was necessary to get me through the month. But I don't want to take them all the time."

The Aston Villa striker Dwight Yorke has reaffirmed his desire to move to Manchester United and is still hoping that a transfer will take place before Thursday's signings deadline for European eligibility.

John Gregory, Villa's manager, has rejected a £10 million offer from United but Yorke said last night: "It is fair to say I still want to go and I would like it to happen before Thursday because I want to play for United in the Champions League."

"It is very flattering that they have said publicly that they want me, and I feel it would be the right move."

CHESTER CITY supporters have dug deep into their pockets to help ease the plight of the club's injured and disenfranchised players. The Third Division club is struggling to meet its wage bill and, with the divide between the players and the chairman Mark Gutterman widening, the Independent Supporters' Association agreed to meet the travelling expenses of the first-team squad.

The supporters say they have made the gesture to help ease the club's financial problems for tonight's home League Cup first-round, second-leg tie against Port Vale. Chester led 2-1 from the away leg.

Michael Fair of the ISA said: "We cannot pay the players' wages but we thought a contribution towards travelling expenses was the least we can do right behind them."

The Inland Revenue will shortly issue a winding-up order against the club in respect of unpaid bills and the manager Kevin Ratcliffe was reported recently to have paid about £5,000 out of his own pocket to meet the club's

water supply to the Deva Stadium was not cut off.

Romania's Dan Petrescu is set to leave Chelsea as they attempt to trim their £2 million wage bill. The 30-year-old was not in the squad at Coventry on Saturday.

Ajax and Real Madrid have been linked with the former Sheffield Wednesday player.

Dejan Stefanovic, Wednesday's Yugoslav international defender or midfielder, has lost an appeal against a Department of Employment decision to refuse him a new work permit.

Manchester's Paul Merson has been banned for three matches after being sent off for the first time in his career during a friendly against Heerenveen in Holland two weeks ago.

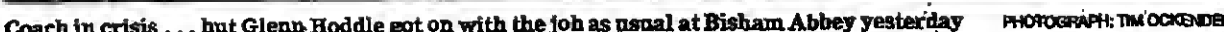
Eric Cantona plays at Old Trafford again tonight when he leads a team against Manchester United in a match which will be the Munich air crash 40 years ago.

Doncaster Rovers yesterday appointed a new chairman, John Ryan, and claimed to be on the verge of signings which will "shock the players of British football". The owners concerned are Sir John Southall and Simon Barker.

AS A mark of respect to those killed or injured, or bereaved by the bomb in Omagh on Saturday the Irish Football Association yesterday announced the cancellation of its international friendly with Malta, due to have been played at Windsor Park tomorrow.

The IFA president Jim Boyce said that after consultations between officials, players and the media, "the decision was made that the game with Malta would be cancelled. It was a unanimous decision."

It is the first time that a terrorist incident has led to a cancellation of a game in the history of the game. In the past there has been a determination not to let football be affected by the troubles but McMenemy, who has only been manager for three games, said: "It wasn't right to play. My theory about going to a match was to place a plaque to celebrate. I cannot see anything to celebrate this week."



PAUL INCE may be an astute and shrewd businessman, but his ill-fated campaign for the European Championship opens in Sweden a fortnight on Saturday.

The Liverpool midfielder was having X-rays last night and fears that he has broken his toe during the Premiership tie against Southampton at The Dell on Sunday. If a fracture is confirmed this morning Ince may be sidelined for up to four weeks.

It was unable to play in the world Cup finals despite suffering a headline ankle fracture towards the end of last season but an injured toe would need rest in England and Liverpool will, however, take solace

From the fact that Ince's team-mate Jamie Redknapp began his latest comeback from injury in a reserve game at Birmingham last night.

The England captain Alastair Shearer yesterday threw his support behind Glenn Hoddle, describing the embattled coach's controversial World Cup diary as "strataguardward".

Shearer said: "I didn't think any of my confidees were broken."

Hoddle will today meet the press, some of whom have called for his resignation, after yesterday's 1-0 defeat by England squad through their paces at Bisham Abbey.

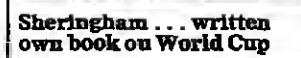
The Middlebrough midfielder Paul Merson, plus players Paul Scholes and Lee Johnson, were missing. Merson picked up an ankle

The England striker Teddy Sheringham is set to make his own World Cup revelation to the public later this year when he includes his thoughts on Hoddle.

Sheringham is believed to go into detail over his nightclub antics before the World Cup, which forced Hoddle to force him to make a public apology.

The Manchester United player, dropped from the starting line-up at the World Cup to make way for Liverpool's Michael Owen, has been criticised by the publishers Little Brown.

The book features the fact that he has worked under several of the game's great managers, including Sir Alex Ferguson, Brian Clough, Alex Ferguson — and Hoddle.



Fruits of win come home to France

FRANCE will make their first appearance as world champions when they take the field in Vienna tomorrow night only 38 days after thrashing Brazil 3-2.

The league season is already two weeks old and French football is on a high. The fact that the new coach Roger Lemerre has had to promote several players to the Dechamps and Zinedine Zidane will not play more than a half in the friendly against Austria highlights France's continued dependence on foreign players.

They will play the first leg of the U-14 of the World Cup 22, but the tide of talent may be starting to turn.

Only one of the World Cup squad has joined the foreign legion, as yet, and three players to keep: Lionel Charbonnier, new of Rangers; and he was off by Bernard Lama — who will deputise for the injured Michel Barthez in Vienna — going the other way to get Ham to Paris St-Germain.

Several of France's top young strikers are staying put: Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet at Monaco, and Robert Pirri at Marseille. In addition a remodelled PSG have signed Germany's Christian Wörns and, for £11 million, Nigeria's flashy playmaker Jay Jay Okocha, who scored on his league debut.

"I'm convinced Okocha of the ambitions of the club, of its new generation of players and the quality of the Paris public. In doing that the World Cup helped me," said PSG's chairman Charles Blery. PSG are the title with the current leaders Marseille, Monaco and Bordeaux.

But only a few clubs with rich backers have such deep pockets as PSG, supported by the cable television company Canal Plus, and Marseille, backed by the Adidas president Robert Louis-Dreyfus. Lyon, the champions, Lens and runners-up Metz had to sell stars they could no longer afford. Metz suffered a humbling 1-0 defeat to HJK Helsinki in the first leg of their Champions League qualifier.

Despite this summer's glory and France's role in setting up Fifa and the World Cup, the suspicion remains that the French are not as keen as their football much. Several players criticised supporters' lack of passion during the finals and their attendance at club level.

This season, though, clubs report that season-ticket sales are up and the first two Sundays saw healthy crowds, including a 60,000 sell-out at Marseille. The season's attendance showed a six per cent rise but still averaged only 16,500, barely half the Premiership's 29,000.

GATESHEAD yesterday succeeded where Cardiff and Swansea had failed and were awarded a franchise for the 1989 Super League season. The club's future, however, has yet to be determined, will play at the town's International Stadium, subject to making improvements.

The club's future was expected to name Kerrod Walters, the former Australian hooker, as their captain, will build a squad from scratch and will have a new stadium in March. They have yet to make an announcement about who will be coach, but Shaun McKee, who will be head coach of the club for most of this season, remains favourite. Royce Simmons, the former Hull coach now in charge at Penrith in Australia, has also been linked with the job.

Gateshead are competing with Castleford for Paul Bell, a centre currently playing with Melbourne Storm.

A decision on the club's application was deferred last Wednesday to give the consortium extra time to provide evidence of their commitment. Mike Newton, director of leisure services for Gateshead borough council, drove to Leeds to meet the council to underline his organisation's commitment and it is understood that Shane Richardson,

An Australian businessman, and Kath Hetherington, a former player of the Rugby Football League, each put up £250,000 as a floocialal guarantee.

That money will quickly disappear as the Richdadscoo claims to have between 12 and 15 Antipodeans signed up. No announcements will be made until a final decision has been made.

Wigan have confirmed that John Monie will be their coach again oext season.

Monie, who returned to the club in one of his last appearances, has signed a one-year extension. "I am happy to be staying for at least the oext 12 months and will review my situation at the end of May," he said.

Tommy Martyn will miss St Helens' trip to Hull next Sunday with ankle ligament damage sustained in last Sunday's victory over Bradford, but the Saints' defence will be bolstered by Saints first feared, Karlie Hammond, who is set to join London Broncos next season, will deputise at The Boulevard if he recovers from a lower back problem.

Wigan's new signing, Expected next month to announce a £1.5 million takeover by the brewers Greenalls.

Richard Chapmso, who kicked seven goals in Featherstone's 34-21 win over Huddersfield, was named as the Second Divisions' Player of the Week.

niser face a heavy fine — even a Formula One ban of the Budapest circuit — by the FIA. After the track lousiness following Michael Schumacher's victory on Sunday. Thousands of Ferrari fans poured on to the track to celebrate, frightening several back-markers while slowing from racing speeds.

Boxing

Ronnie Davies, who helped Chris Eubank win world titles, has taken over as trainer of the unbeaten Howard Eastman, who is preparing for his British middleweight title challenge against Glen Catley in Bristol on October 24.

Drugs in sport

Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, has been criticised by his own anti-drugs chief after his call to reduce the list of banned substances. Prince Alexandre de Merode said he was "appalled" that Samaranch had said he saw no harm in athletes taking certain drugs as long as they were not a health threat.

He is set to step up his fight against drugs at an IOC executive committee meeting in Lausanne on Thursday.

signed Michael Deboe, who spent most of last season with Greater London Leopards, averaging two points and two rebounds per contest.

Football
AYON INSURANCE COMBINATION:
 First Division: QPR 2 Reading 0.
AFRICAN NATIONS' CUP: Preliminary
 round, second leg: Algeria 2 Libya 0
 (agg. 6-1); Cape Verde 0 Mali 0 (0-3);
 Liberia 2 Niger 0 (3-2); Angola 2 Benin 0
 (3-2); Congo 0 Chad 0 (1-1); Congo won on
 the away goals rule; Gabon 3 Equatorial
 Guinea 0 (5-0); Tanzania 0 Burundi 1 (0-2);
 Kenya 3 Djibouti 1 (12-1); Malawi 0 Na-
 mibia 1 (1-3); Mozambique 2 Botswana 1
 (2-1); Rwanda 0 Uganda 0 (0-0).

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helm; A: NY Yankees 6 Tampa 3; Chicago
 5 Seattle 3; Kansas City 3 Tampa Bay 4;
 Division 1: NY Yankees 1956-1958, 1960,
 1962-1963; Boston (71-95 1959-1961, 1963,
 3 Baltimore (66-106 1962-1963); Kansas City
 1964-1965; Cleveland 1966-1967; Chicago
 1968 55-86 1969-1970; Cincinnati 1
 (51-88 47-84 1971-1972) Seattle 1; Anaheim
 (1962-1964 1966 1967-1968) 2; Texas (65-66-
 67-68)
 NATIONAL LEAGUE: Cincinnati 5
 Montreal 1; St Louis 1 Pittsburgh 4; Houston 1
 (11th) Chicago Cubs 2; Toronto 2; Philadel-
 phia 1; Pittsburgh 1; St Louis 1; San Diego 1
 Chicago 4 Milwaukee 0 (1st); San Diego
 4 Milwaukee 4 (2nd); LA 1 Atlanta 2; Ariz-
 ona 6 NY Mets 1; Leading pitchers: N.Y.
 Yankees (1956-1958) 1; St. Louis (1962-63)
 1; Philadelphia (1965, 1966-67) 1; Cincinnati
 1; Houston (1971-1972 1974-1975) 3; San
 Diego 1; Atlanta (1976-1977) 1; San Diego
 (59-63 64-69) 1; Mets 1; San Diego
 (1980-1984 1985-1986) 3; San Francisco
 (1986-1988) 1; LA (1989-90 1991-92) 1

Dunnington (Eng) O; L. Kautman (US) Z. K.

Szekely, S. & Kopec (US) & Landers Hiller Persson 85; Kraman 5 (1 unfinished); Sashidharan, Plakhot 5; L. Kaufman 48; M. Houska (Eng), Szekely, Kopec 4. Masters: Round 6 & S. Knott (Eng), A. Shah (Ind) 0; K. Mah (Eng), I. C. Adrian (Fr) 0; E. Vagh (Hun) & R. Palliser (Eng) & Round 7: A. Whitely (Eng), I. Knott 0; R. Wade (Eng) & M. H. Palliser 0. S. Williams (Eng) 1.

Crown Green Bowls

WATERLOO: Fourth round: J Barclay (Parry) at A Hart (Stratford) 21-8; A Lamb (Prosser) at W Holden (Durston) 21-6; S Burt (Hart) at P Smith (Parsloes) 21-7; L Lewis (Warrington) at J Henson (Chipping) 21-11; D Carter (Heald) at J Coulton (Salford) 21-13; D Solter (Stratford) at E Groves (Stratford) 21-14; A Beakley (Cradockton) at J Hughes (Barnet) 21-9; R Fildes (Heald) at A Walker (Sheffiled) 21-18; C Shipley (at G Babington (Warrington) 21-17; L Wells (Warrington) at S Frith (Weaverham) 21-16; O Scott (Storden) at A Lamb (Manchester) 21-13; N Grenther

[illegible]

Snooker

GRAND PRIX (Plymouth Pavillion): Final qualifying rounds: R Hall (Fin) bt J Birch (Eng) 5-1; M Couch (Eng) bt J Chappell (Wales) 5-0; P Wallace (NI) bt L Walker (Wales) 5-0; S James (Eng) bt J Delaney (Ire) 5-2; G Griffin (Wales) bt P Davies (Wales) 5-3; J Henshaw (Eng) bt P Lines (Eng) 5-3; C Gilbertson (Ire) bt M Davis (Eng) 5-0; J Swain (NI) bt A Davies (Wales) 5-4; N Pearce (Eng) bt S Judd (Eng) 5-3; D Raymonds (Eng) bt M Gray (Eng) 5-2; J

WORTHINGTON CUP: First round, second leg: Burnley v Scarborough; Brentford v W Brom; Bristol Rovers v L Orient; Burnley v Bury; Cardiff v Fulham; Exeter City v Torquay; Chester v Port Vale; Huddersfield v Grimsby; Colchester v Bournemouth; Swale v Oldham; Darlington v Sheffield United; Gillingham v Southend; Halifax v Wrexham; Hull v Notts County; Luton v Barnet; Nantwich v Crewe Alexandra; Carlisle v Swansea; Oxford Utd v Luton; Portsmouth v Plymouth; Preston v Rochdale; Rochdale v Wigan; Scunthorpe v Lincoln City; Shrewsbury v Bristol City; Sunderland v York; Watford v Cambridge; Wolverhampton v Barnet; Wycombe v

[illegible]

A. Cobb v Cork C (7.30); Killybegs C v
 Waterford (7.30); Ch. Galway Utd v Moyne
 Utd (7.30); Ch. Drogheda Utd v Dundalk
 (7.30); St. Shamrock RWC v St. Francis. Ph.
 H.F. Everton v Shelbourne (7.30).
 U-21 FRIENDLY: Postponed: N Ireland v
 Malta. (In respect of those killed in
 Omagh).
 FRIENDLY: Altrincham v Tranmere XI
 (7.30); Crawley Tn v Morsham; Man Utd v
 Eric Cantona XI.

Rugby Union
 TOUR MATCH: Munster v Morocco (3.30).
 Gloucester Pls. Cork).
 CLUBS: Pontypridd v Edinburgh (7.15).

CHINA's Xie Jun has been declared the winner by default of the women's world championship final elimination match against Alicia Galliamova after the Russian failed to arrive for the first game in Shenzhen, writes **Leonard Barden**.

The Russian federation said her non-appearance was in protest at the entire match being played in one country and will demand further discussion at next month's FIDE

subsequently shared between the two after the 1990 census. The population of Tatarstan, where the republic's capital Kazan is located, is 1.5 million. However the offer was later withdrawn and China's interest in the match there is still uncertain.

● Teenagers are among the leaders in all three sections of the Hampstead International Festival at University College School, London. India's Krishnan Seshikiran, 17, is the youngest member of the grandmaster group. The Bristol student, who has won the British Chess Championship, is 17, and Mull's Richard Adams, 16, is the youngest player with 54% in the main group. The other two are England's Craig Hanley, 14, from Lancaster, best Frank Reel, 15, from London, and Germany, the No. 1 seed from Germany, in the opening round of the Fide rating tournament. Twelve countries are represented.

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--------------|
| 8 | Norwich F | v | Concorvey |
| 9 | Tottenham | v | Shelf Wed |
| 9 | West Ham | v | Mill Utd |
| NATIONWIDE LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION | | | |
| 9 | Bristol City | v | Walsford |
| 10 | Bury | v | Woking |
| 11 | Grays | v | Oxford |
| 16 | Grimsby | v | Huddersfield |
| 16 | Millwall | v | QPR |
| 16 | Port Vale | v | West Brom |
| 16 | Portsmouth | v | Weymouth |
| 16 | Southend | v | Wokingham |
| 16 | Swindon | v | Tranmere |
| 16 | Wolves | v | Swindon |
| SECOND DIVISION | | | |

| | | | |
|----|-------------|---|--------------|
| 23 | Massfield | v | Lincoln |
| 24 | Man City | v | Wetheren |
| 25 | Northampton | v | Motts Co |
| 25 | Ockham | v | Chatterfield |
| 27 | Preston | v | Sleets |
| 28 | Reading | v | Woking |
| 28 | Wigan | v | Walsleywood |
| 30 | Wycombe | v | Walsall |

THIRD DIVISION

| | | | |
|----|--------------|---|-----------|
| 31 | Brentford | v | Strigton |
| 32 | Cardiff | v | Rochdale |
| 33 | Chamber | v | Hull |
| 34 | Derbyshire | v | Rushleigh |
| 35 | Southampton | v | Southsore |
| 36 | Peterborough | v | Swindon |
| 37 | Plymouth | v | Barnet |
| 38 | Nottingham | v | Cambridge |

| | | | |
|----|------------|---|------------|
| 40 | Colbie | v | Dundee Utd |
| 41 | Hearts | v | Aberdeen |
| 42 | Kilmarnock | v | Rangers |
| 43 | Motherwell | v | Dundermine |

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

| | | | |
|----|-------------|---|-----------|
| 44 | Airdrie | v | St Mirren |
| 45 | Falkirk | v | Hibernian |
| 46 | Morton | v | Hamilton |
| 47 | Rath Rovers | v | Ayr Utd |
| 48 | Stranraer | v | Clydebank |

SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION

| | | | |
|----|-------|---|---------------|
| 49 | Athol | v | Inverness Ctd |
|----|-------|---|---------------|

European Athletics Championships

Britain's young sprinters will have a lot to live up to when they take to their blocks at the Nep Stadium today. **Duncan Mackay** reports from Budapest

Christie's heirs apparent are fast tracked

AS Formula One left town yesterday a different kind of speedster set up camp when Britain's best young sprinters arrived for the European Championships.

The 100 metres runners Darren Campbell, Dwain Chambers and Mark Devonish will be among the first British athletes to step foot on the track when the first round takes place at the Nep Stadium today. Few will have to face the hurdles they do in following Linford Christie.

"The fact Linford has won this title on every occasion since 1986 does put more pressure on us," said Chambers.

"But any one of the three of us can win it."

Christie could still have a big part to play in deciding who follows him as champion. He coaches Campbell and manages Chambers. "He's been great and given me advice about how to prepare," said Chambers.

Of Britain's trio Campbell has run the fastest this summer, clocking 10.20sec in Zurich last week. The quickest man in Europe this season is Italy's Carlo Baccarini, who ran 10.07sec early in the year — a performance he has not come anywhere near reproducing. But Chambers, who set a world junior record of 10.06sec last year, can boast

the fastest personal best of all the entrants.

The 20-year-old Chambers and Devonish, 22, whose personal best is 10.22sec, emerged three years ago when they won European junior titles on Hungarian soil.

Whoever wins they will still only be in Formula Three compared to Christie's Formula One. "Please don't call me the new Linford. Don't call any of us it"

Wariso has raced only once since he beat Black in the trials last month, a defeat which cost the British team captain his place in the individual event and led to his

medals in Stuttgart in 1986, nine in Split in 1990 and six in Helsinki four years ago, the magnificent, but crumbling Nep Stadium is expected to see another wave of British success over the next six days to help give the beleaguered sport a golden hue.

Other potential winners include the hat-trick seeking pair of Colin Jackson in the 110m hurdles, Steve Buckley in the javelin, Jonathan Edwards in the triple jump, Douglas Walker in the 200m, Denise Lewis in the heptathlon and Paula Radcliffe in the 10,000m.

The first with a chance of winning a medal is Jon Brown in tonight's 10,000m.

'Please don't call me the new Linford. Don't call any of us it'

Mark Richardson, Europe's top-ranked 400m runner, has been in touch with Black to discuss what tactics he should employ against his closest rivals, Iwan Thomas and Solomon Wariso, as Britain look set for a clean sweep.

retirement. The Haringey runner has postponed his wedding to be able to prepare for these championships. "Common sense has prevailed — for once," he said self-mockingly yesterday. After winning eight gold

medals in Stuttgart in 1986, nine in Split in 1990 and six in Helsinki four years ago, the magnificent, but crumbling Nep Stadium is expected to see another wave of British success over the next six days to help give the beleaguered sport a golden hue.

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Cricket

County Championship Yorkshire v Lancashire

Keedy turns Roses match

Andy Wilson at Headingley

AT tea on the final day of this compelling Roses Match, Yorkshire were 106 for three, needing only another 137 for a victory which would maintain their outside championship hopes and kybosh Lancashire's for good measure.

Less than two hours later, they were all out for 183, and Lancashire had won by 59 runs. Lancashire climb to second, 21 points behind Surrey, who travel to Headingley in a fortnight's time.

The unlikely hero of this victory was an ex-Yorkshire player, Gary Keedy, a 23-year-old left-arm spinner in only his third appearance of the season, took five of the last eight wickets for 35.

His first-innings figures of two for 161 in 50 overs were rather too typical of his record for Lancashire, but yesterday he exploited a traditional last-day pitch offering considerable turn and occasional variable bounce.

The wicket of Darren Lehmann, leg before to one which kept low, was the 100th of his career. But with Matthew Wood and Anthony McGrath both batting sensibly, and the Lancashire attack again missing Wasim Akram because of a recurrence of his toe injury, Yorkshire still appeared to hold the advantage.

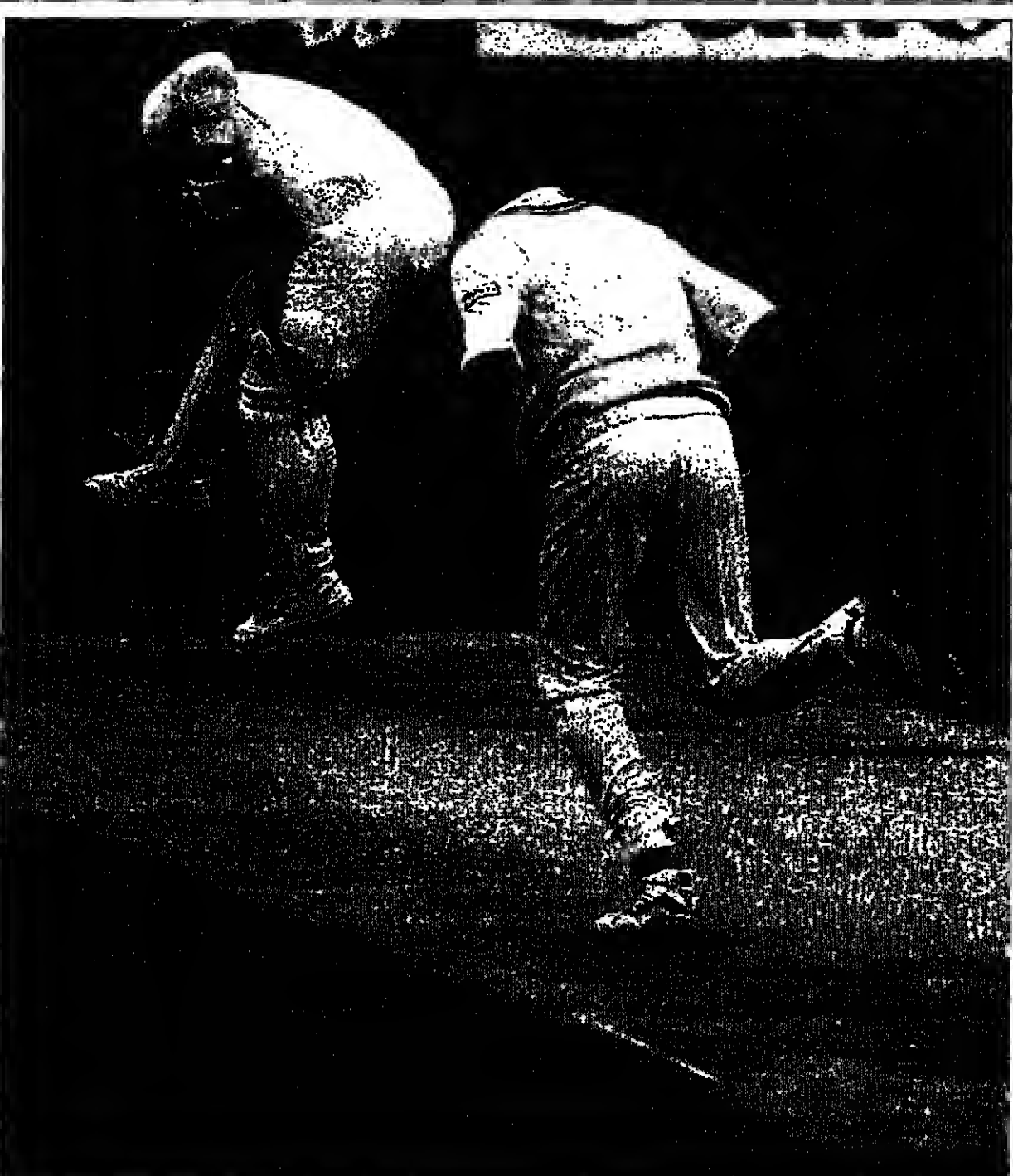
They had earned it too, first by battling to within 27 of Lancashire's daunting 484, then by dismissing them for 215 second time around, the last six wickets falling for 106 yesterday despite a determined 85 from Warren Hegg.

John Crawley only added three to his overnight 53 before becoming the last of Paul Hutchinson's five victims, and Matthew Hoggard, so expensive in the first innings, polished off the last three wickets in 10 balls.

But shortly after tea Graham Lloyd, who had already taken one excellent low slip catch to dismiss David Byas, snapped up another to send back McGrath. Wood was another beaten by low bounces and Gary Yates, who picked up four wickets for the third time in four championship innings had Richard Blakey leg before.

Yates also took the next wicket, of Gavin Hamilton, but Crawley, captaining in the absence of Wasim, deserved a share of the credit for keeping the field up to encourage the Scotsman to hit out. After two leg-side boundaries, he lobbed a catch to cover.

Yorkshire continued to bat positively, Richard Stamp making 14 from 12 balls before being bowled by Keedy, and James Middlebrook driving Yates to mid-off. The last pair resisted for six tense overs, but with 21 minutes remaining, Hoggard was low offering no shot to Keedy and Lancashire joy was unconfined.



Going for a duck... Courtney Walsh fires a bouncer at Julian Thompson, Kent's No. 10 batsman

Gloucestershire v Kent

Alleyne works con-trick

David Foot at Nevill Road

FROM DEEP within the Gloucestershire dressing-room, as Kent prepared warily for home, came the exultant chorus of a regimental song. It was heavy with patriotism, stirring words of trumpet calls, back-to-back fighting and the triumph of the Glorious Glosters.

One could only imagine that Jack Russell was the musical coordinator to celebrate his county's seventh championship win of the season. Amid this unlikely ingenuitas was an undeniable *esprit de corps* which, despite the late afternoon drizzle that threatened to foil them when Kent had lost

nine wickets, eventually brought victory by 128 runs.

It restated the county's claims to be still taken seriously as championship candidates. "We only need Surrey to have a bit of a hiccup," said the captain Mark Alleyne. "I honestly believe we can catch them."

He also revealed the confidence trick that ultimately ended Kent's sturdy resistance and brought the downfall of Carl Hooper on 111. The West Indian was playing, unimpaired of the mountainous target of 436, as if he could mock such daunt statistics and even win the match on his own. He already had a double-century to his credit and appeared to be on his way to another.

Gloucestershire were a

bowler short, because of Alleyne's injury, and the pitch was now flat. And at that point Alleyne gambled. He brought on Dominic Hewson. Here was a player who had never bowled in the championship before. What little he had achieved at medium pace had been in form matches at Cheltenham College.

Yet Alleyne had noted the way he had suddenly conjured up a slow ball in the nets. "Try one," he suggested. Hooper played several philanthropic deliveries with understandable disdain; then, deceived by the change of pace, he checked too late and patting straight into extra cover's hands.

Kent had often looked like staying the course and their position was strengthened

when their captain Steve Marsh led his last partner Martin McGee off as the drizzle intensified. But, with seven overs left, they returned for a nominal finale. The pair had hardly got their pads off before the singing started.

John Morris, who scored 163 yesterday in the drawn match against Glamorgan, apologised afterwards after finding himself under suspicion of making a V-sign to club members at Chester-le-Street.

However the former England batsman said: "I was directed at a mate of mine who beat £20 I wouldn't make a century. If the members feel it was directed at them I apologise. I have no quarrel with the members here."

Golf

Singh a song of practice making perfect

Mike Selvey on a first major for the Fijian in Seattle

FAIL to prepare, they say. Well, all his career Vijay Singh has left nothing to chance, and on Sunday afternoon, as a soft rain drifted down on to Sahalee Country Club, the many hundreds of hours on the practice range paid their dividend. His parents had known what they were doing when they bestowed upon him the Hindi word for victory.

It was an emotional moment as Dad and he had lifted the huge Wanamaker Trophy aloft and took the stand along with a cheque for \$540,000 (\$335,000). Singh, 35, had played the last round in 68 strokes for a total of 271, nine under par, giving him victory in the US PGA Championship by two from Steve Stricker and by three from Steve Elkington. And it was sweet.

Stricker played first, swayed from the trouble but to a bunker to the left of the green. Singh followed him in, and then, with the threat of the watery backdrop looming large, left his recovery 15 feet short. But so did Stricker and, after Singh calmly rolled in the most important putt of his life, the American left his inches above the hole.

It gave Singh a two-shot cushion and the freedom to play the hardest hole on the course aggressively in the knowledge that even a bogey would have to be matched by Stricker's birdie.

"You know, I was pretty nervous on the 17th tee," he recalled. "I'd seen Steve go in the bunker and my caddy had said to me, 'Just go to all the middle of the green and putt.' I said I knew what to do, for goodness' sake. But the green looks pretty small from way up there. When I hit the sand, all I wanted was to give myself a putt, and when I missed, I really expected Steve to make his as well. It was a relief when he didn't."

Singh played tribute to his caddy and well he might, for Dave Reinick has a bit more knowledge of winning majors than the player himself, the Scot having carried for Joe Maria Olazabal when he won at Augusta and for Elkington when he took this same PGA title three years ago.

"No, he was good," said Singh. "I said beforehand that we should have a conversation on the way round, and not just about the job in hand. So we talked about horse racing or whatever. But he got me back on track on the back nine. After I'd got away with bad drives at 12 and 13, and hit the trees on 14, he just told me straight: 'You can't do this, you can't win golf tournaments with shots like this.'"

And when on 15 I thought about going against my game plan to hit driver as I had all week and go with the two-iron he still manufactured a recovery which put him on the front of the green. "I just hopped a wedge and hooked the hell out of it," he said later.

But above all there was his putting. Over the years he has tried just about every method and tool for propelling the ball towards the hole, including for a time a broom-handle putter, in an attempt to conquer his fallibility when standing over the sort of putts that must be holed. This week he has putted cross-handed and time after time it saved his skin.

On Sunday, Singh clinched the title at the short 17th, a hole of 215 yards, the ball from an elevated tee, with a lake wrapped round the front and right of the green and a pin located insidiously only five yards from a slick slope into the water.

Swann bowls England to victory

THE Northamptonshire tall-runder Graeme Swann bowled England to a 39-run victory over Pakistan yesterday in the first NatWest Under-19 Test at Worcester. His second-innings figures of six for 46 made up for his disappointment at registering a pair.

The World Cup holders England needed only 25 balls to dismiss Pakistan for 160 by taking the last two wickets for 16 runs on the final morning. Swann captured the wicket of Irfan Fazil, who hoisted a catch to deep midwicket, to complete the match.

Scoreboard

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

DURHAM v GLAMORGAN

Riverdale Durham (11pts) drew with Glamorgan (11pts)

Gloucestershire First Innings 388 (D C Crawley 105, N J Spink 52, Thomas 107)

Gloucestershire Second Innings 215 (P A Hoggard 85, D C Crawley 71, R J Blakey 67, G M Hamilton 50)

YORKSHIRE v LANCASHIRE

Headingley Lancashire (22pts) beat Yorkshire (7) by 58 runs

Lancashire First Innings 484 (D C Crawley 105, N J Spink 52, Thomas 107)

Lancashire Second Innings 215 (P A Hoggard 85, D C Crawley 71, R J Blakey 67, G M Hamilton 50)

GLoucestershire v Kent

Headingley Gloucestershire (22pts) beat Kent (4) by 128 runs

Gloucestershire First Innings 436 (D C Crawley 105, N J Spink 52, Thomas 107)

Gloucestershire Second Innings 215 (P A Hoggard 85, D C Crawley 71, R J Blakey 67, G M Hamilton 50)

Gloucestershire v Kent

Headingley Gloucestershire (22pts) beat Kent (4) by 128 runs

Gloucestershire First Innings 436 (D C Crawley 105, N J Spink 52, Thomas 107)

Gloucestershire Second Innings 215 (P A Hoggard 85, D C Crawley 71, R J Blakey 67, G M Hamilton 50)

First U-19 Test

Northamptonshire 328 (G A Smith 80, J Foad 80, J Foad 80, J Foad 80)

Pakistan 160 (Irfan Fazil 46, Irfan Fazil 46, Irfan Fazil 46, Irfan Fazil 46)

Gloucestershire v Kent

Headingley Gloucestershire (22pts) beat Kent (4) by 128 runs

Gloucestershire First Innings 436 (D C Crawley 105, N J Spink 52, Thomas 107)

Gloucestershire Second Innings 215 (P A Hoggard 85, D C Crawley 71, R J Blakey 67, G M Hamilton 50)

Tennis

Henman hits back after charting in top 10 for first time

Richard Jago in New Haven

TIM HENMAN was given an ideal platform for taking a tilt at his critics when he climbed into the top 10 for the first time in his career yesterday. It is the first time there have been two British men in this world elite.

Greg Rusedski has dropped from sixth to seventh. He has not played since his abortive campaign at Wimbledon with a badly injured ankle.

Henman's rise from No. 11 comes after a week of no great success, and is partly due to Yevgeny Kafelnikov losing the ranking points he gained for winning the Pilot Pen International title here last year. But it has enabled the British No. 3 to remind people of his harsh remarks about

the Pilot Pen event. It gives him the prospect of a quarter-final with Richard Krajicek.

Rusedski, meanwhile, is likely to open at the RCA Championships in Indianapolis tomorrow against Magnus Larsson, who gave Pete Sampras trouble in their ATP Championship semi-final.

It will take an outstanding effort for Rusedski to win this. "I just want to get five or six matches under my belt before the US Open," he said. With only two weeks to go that will be difficult.

Sampras was denied the chance of returning to the world No. 1 spot on Sunday by Patrick Rafter, whose build-up to his US Open title defence at Flushing Meadows has led to the finest run of his career.

The Australian's 1-6, 7-6,

6-4 victory over Sampras in the ATP Championship final earned him a 10th win in succession.

His triumph was marred by a noisy controversy at match point which brought rare and protracted dissent from Sampras. Lars Graf, the umpire whom Sampras refused to acknowledge after losing to Karol Kucera in the Australian Open, was again involved. The German overruled a line judge's call of out on a Rafter serve, deeming it an ace — probably correctly, on the evidence of replays.

Sampras was denied the chance of returning to the world No. 1 spot on Sunday by Patrick Rafter, whose build-up to his US Open title defence at Flushing Meadows has led to the finest run of his career.

The Australian's 1-6, 7-6,

Cricket

News and Scores, Counties update

0930 16 13 ++

| | | | | | |
|------------|----|------------|----|-----------|----|
| Derbyshire | 24 | Kent | 30 | Somerset | 36 |
| Durham | 25 | Lancs | 31 | Surrey | 37 |
| Essex | 26 | Leics | 32 | Sussex | 38 |
| Glamorgan | 27 | Middlesex | 33 | Warwick | 39 |
| Gloucs | 28 | Northants | 34 | Worcester | 40 |
| Hampshire | 29 | Nottingham | 35 | Yorkshire | 41 |

Complete county scores 0930 16 13 23

1-day International

England v South Africa

Live Commentary 0930 16 13 21

Match Reports 0930 16 13 22

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TheGuardian INTERACTIVE

New effort to launch British League, page 13
Gateshead booked for Spuer League, page 14

Vialli testifies before drugs inquiry, page 14
Lancashire keep up the challenge, page 15

SportsGuardian

Champions off to a winning start

Premiership: Arsenal 2 Nottingham Forest 1

Overmars tells Forest

David Lacey

A SHARP piece of opportunism by Emmanuel Petit eased Arsenal's frustration at Highbury last night as they struggled to break down Nottingham Forest's obstinate defence.

Petit's header gave the Premiership champions the lead just before the hour, but then Geoff Thomas, having missed a chance earlier, brought the scores level in the 77th minute with a firm drive only for Marc Overmars to restore Arsenal's lead two minutes

later, booking a rebound over Dave Beasant with an overhead kick.

Arsenal began their defence of the title amid reminders that nothing lasts for ever. The game marked the 10th anniversary of the day George Graham's championship-winning defence of Dixon, Bould, Adams and Winterburn first played together, but Martin Keown now fills Steve Bould's position while Tony Adams is talking of retirement.

Nevertheless, Forest's return to the Premiership immediately brought them face to face with what is now the definitive Arsenal of Arsène Wenger. Not that Forest were the definitive Forest. Bereft of the prolific scoring partnership of Pierre Van Hooldonk and Kevin Campbell, injuries and suspensions had also eaten into their squad.

Yet experience was there in the shape of Steve Chettle, Steve Stone, Thomas and the



Twin towers... Arsenal's Adams and Petit block the way for Forest's Darcheville in the match at Highbury last night

35-year-old Glyn Hodges, playing for his fourth club under Dave Beasant, and Beasant, now 39, was again a Premiership goalkeeper.

Forest set out to disrupt Arsenal's movements by packing their midfield and leaving Jean-Claude Darcheville, the

striker on loan from Rennes, up front. Not surprisingly Arsenal set out from the start to launch Overmars past Thierry Bonalair on the left wing, leaving Dennis Bergkamp to unravel the opposition through the middle.

Jon Olaf Hjelde achieved

two important interceptions to deny first Overmars and then Bergkamp shooting opportunities after Forest's outer cover had been pulled apart by Arsenal's passing. There was an inevitability about the home side's mounting pressure although Darch-

ville raised a few eyebrows, not least those of Martin Keown, when he outpaced the Arsenal defender on the left before aiming a low cross towards Andy Johnson which Nigel Winterburn just managed to clear.

Arsenal almost scored in the 24th minute when Nicolas Anelka gathered a lob from Patrick Vieira and drove a narrow-angled shot against the foot of the near post. Ten minutes before half-time another French combination, by Forest this time, might have seen Arsenal fall behind. Bonalair's pace opened up the left wing and a well-timed pass sent Darcheville clear and onside. Again the shooting angle was narrow, however, and David Seaman was able to save feet first.

The hamstring injury suffered by Hjelde at the end of the first half brought on Des Lytle for the second and forced Forest to reorganise slightly at the back. For Arsenal, however, the prob-

lem of finding the accuracy and imagination to break down an increasingly determined defence remained.

In the 56th minute Bergkamp's through pass found Anelka sprinting clear and for once not offside, but it was only to shoot wide. A moment earlier Thomas, moving into a large gap in the Arsenal penalty area, had sliced Bonalair's cross into the crowd. At least the night was promising a goal for somebody.

It came when Arsenal went ahead in the 58th minute, courtesy of Adams' power in the air and Petit's quick reflexes. Forest having conceded a free-kick on the right, Bergkamp floated the ball towards the far post where Adams headed it against the bar. Petit ducked in to nod the ball back past Beasant.

Arsenal (4-4-2): Seaman; Olsson, Keown, Adams, Winterburn; Parkin, Vieira, Petit, Darcheville, Johnson, Thomas. Nottingham Forest (4-4-2): Beasant; Bonalair, Hjelde, Chettle, Rogers; Armstrong, Stone, Johnson, Thomas; Hodges, Darcheville. Referee: M. Riley (Leeds).

Des's job safe until United go poaching



Jim White

SATURDAYS are Saturdays again. After almost three months without it, 13 weeks of thinking we are happy with dawn-to-dusk World Cup and cliffhanger Tests, the real thing is back: Match Of The Day.

Like a trusty cardigan rediscovered in a bottom drawer, Des Lynam was there again, ready to guide us through the day's events. Not that he had many goals to report, or indeed many games, since Saturday afternoon is now considered an inconvenience for the Premiership schedulers.

But there was enough to make you feel you were in touch: Lee Sharpe's Paula Yates rinse; Coventry's new kit which suggests they have contracted the same tailor who provides guards' uniforms for Connex South Central; and the thought that if Chelsea's pricey cosmopolitans are undone on a hot August Saturday in the Midlands, a wet January Wednesday at Selhurst Park could prove very entertaining.

But lurking within the pleasure of Match Of The Day's return is the painful realisation that this could be one of the last times our summers are ended by Des's arch welcome. Up in Manchester something ugly, impatient and disturbing is stirring and that is not a reference to the mood of City's fans after their introduction to the facts of Second Division life at Craven Cottage on Friday.

Next month sees the start-up of MUTV, the latest weapon in Manchester United's attempt at world domination. The channel boasts that it will be a seven-day-a-week point of entry into the global brand that is Manchester United.

The eagle-eyed, incidentally, will have noticed that the words "Football" and "Club" have been Stalinised from the coat of arms on the team's new shirt; their demise, perhaps, the result of being considered terms hopelessly archaic in today's world of multi-tiered, high-leverage ples.

And with MUTV's arrival on a digital transponder near you, Des and the team must be wondering how long it will be before those long-prepared obituaries for the nation's favourite football show are published. This is not because the BBC's finest will have much to worry about as MUTV's schedule

stands. For £4.99 a month you can treat yourself to nightly excitements such as "Megastore Megabucks", in which the subscriber can find other ways of parting with hard-earned cash to fill the club coffers.

Then there is "Mani Menu", 30 minutes of fast-paced fun in the company of club's chef Jesper Jespersen — yes, even the cook is a Scandinavian — explaining how to whip up Giggsy's favourite pre-match snack. And to round off the day look no further than a fans' darts challenge. Here lardy oats in red shirts throw arrows around, a contest normally available for free on the Old Trafford forecourt when Leeds are in town.

It is early days and Manchester United plc can hardly expect the mix of old matches and celebrity Polyfilla to contribute much to their dividends just yet. Nor can they expect many viewers. What nature of fan could it be who would eschew the opportunity to watch their team live on ITV in the Champions League on a Wednesday night, for instance, in favour of a round of MUTV's very own "Junior Masters Fan"?

Greg Dyke, the freshly appointed board member in control of this sort of thing at Old Trafford, knows this more than most: the only way MUTV will be a serious proposition is when it starts to show United's games live. There is really no other point to it.

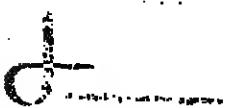
WHEN that day comes the entire picture changes. From being a quaint little operation which columnists can cheerfully satirise, MUTV will be the agent of change in the way our football is run. As they take their ball away, insisting on keeping all the money earned from subscriptions without any of that grubby trickle-down nonsense, we will see the whole pyramid structure of the game end.

United will cut some sort of deal with a few other rich clubs, as it is an unhappy truth grasped even by the Old Trafford boardroom that their team has to play someone. But it will not involve the BBC, nor any other free-to-view broadcaster. Quite simply it is in the club's commercial interests to ensure MUTV is the only provider of Manchester United games on television.

Meanwhile, until the real matches arrive, most United fans will vote with their wallets, preferring a little bit of Des on a Saturday night to "The Red Café". They might also consider why the club could find several million pounds to set up a television channel but refused to fund Marcelo Salas's salary, and wonder which would have been the better long-term bet.

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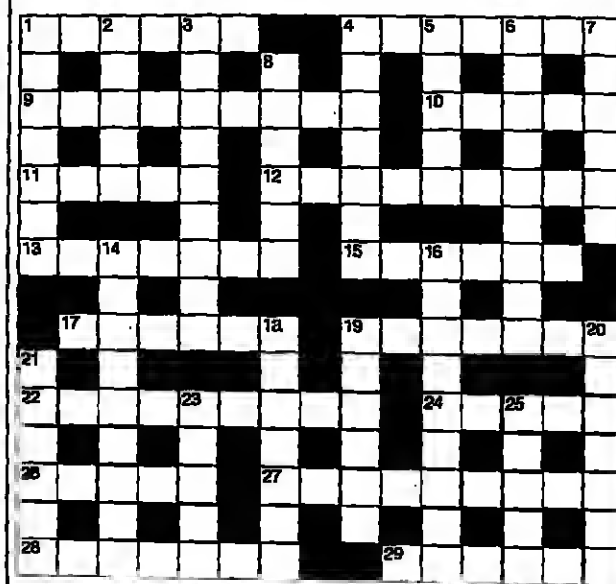
"Where are the predictions of the future in which we all zip about above the rooftops in our own little aircars? Where are the designs for moon colonies. When did the future go out of fashion to be replaced by our own recycled past?"

Linda Grant

G2 p7

Guardian Crossword No 21,356

Set by Fawley

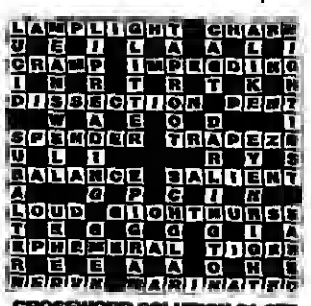


Across

- 1 Foot of ill-advised row — endless interrupting (6)
- 4 Department circulates urgent appeal to clarify a message (7)
- 9 Feel elated, having non-speaking role broadcast (4,2,3)
- 10 Punish second to go crazy — not with it (5)
- 11 Feline creature represented in Oz (5)
- 12 Where documents should be, cheese sandwiches — faces trouble (9)
- 13,15 Small area of Beds where 1 across may have grown up (7,6)
- 17,19 Similar initiatives in 10 and 22 extended for peacekeepers (6,7)
- 22 Suffered in Germany, and therefore new wife's left (9)

Down

- 1 Relying on this, one may stroke bird nesting in cliff, perhaps (7)
- 2 Roundabout had room for me, Bob and Thomas (5)
- 3 Push, then halt — wrong gear selected by clergyman (6,3)
- 4,19 Maybe one could repair the hole in one's hose (7,6)
- 5 Engine noise about to start fit of pique (5)

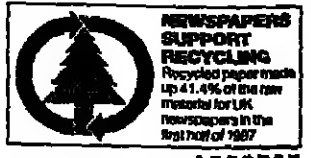


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,356

- 6 Heard evidence of ratings pulling up? (2-5-2)
- 7 Drunkard has a little cash tucked in hat (6)
- 8,18 Gas supplied by small company too, we hear (8,7)
- 14 Hardy heroine brings in new trend for full costume (4,5)
- 16 Clergyman absorbs rising skill, given some muscle (9)
- 18 See 8
- 19 See 4 down
- 20 Put down topic for discussion (7)
- 21 Does one resemble a star since tucking into a couple of pints? Not quiet! (6)
- 22 Part of Blarney you found very posh (5)
- 25 One ruminates, setting up a shopping precinct (5)

Solution tomorrow

22 Skunk? Then call our solutions line on 0891 338 222. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS



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